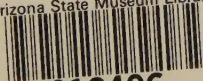




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These are found in the N. Solomon Islands. The sunshade is worn when out in a canoe. The lobe of the ear is stretched by its ornament, sometimes to breaking point.

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IN THE ISLES OF KING SOLOMON

*AN ACCOUNT OF TWENTY-FIVE YEARS
SPENT AMONGST THE PRIMITIVE
SOLOMON ISLANDERS*

BY
A. I. HOPKINS

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS & 2 MAPS

London
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CHAPTER ONE

Introductory

THIS book is an attempt to describe the ordinary life of the Solomon Islanders as the writer found them when he began to live among them more than twenty-five years ago.

The Solomon Islands are a chain of seven large, and very many small, islands which stretch for about 600 miles roughly parallel to the N.E. coast of Australia. The large islands are from 80 to 120 miles in length, two to five thousand feet in height, and nowhere more than about 30 miles in breadth; about half that breadth would be perhaps a very rough average.

A simple description of the islands must be attempted. To place them as they are before eyes that have never seen them is impossible. Tropical beauty must be personally seen to be realized. Perhaps the best way to picture them is to land an imaginary traveller on the top of the hill at the Government station of Tulagi, in the centre of the South Solomons. Tulagi, when I first saw it, was a small islet, rising three or four hundred feet out of the sea. It was just being cleared for planting

coconuts. You could walk round it in forty minutes. On the top was one small house, recently built for the newly appointed Commissioner. England had taken the British Solomons under its protection, and appointed Mr. Woodford as the first Commissioner to break the way for a settled administration. The day is fine. The sea is of clearest blue ; you can look deep down into the ocean, or glance over its brilliant shining surface. The depths are bright with highly coloured fish, many of weird shapes, darting about ; the coral lies gleaming blue and red like a fairy garden. Out of this rises the little islet of Tulagi, forming one side of a fine harbour. From the top of the hill you see stretched before you the South Solomons. At your feet lies Gela or Florida, a small island of some 3000 to 4000 people. They live there quietly enough, for their old heathen days are over.

Out west you see, on a clear day, part of the coast of Bugotu, and you think of the island further north beyond sight, from which came the large war head-hunting canoes. They made Bugotu a favourite hunting ground. But in 1899 that came to an end. A punitive expedition found and broke up their war canoes, and gave a decisive knock-out blow to the Rubiana head-hunters. There are beyond Rubiana more large islands, still wild for the most part, Choiseul and Bouganville, and others once German owned. But of these I know personally nothing. Now return to the hill-top of Tulagi. Within sight lie south-west and south-east dark green mountain chains. That to the south-west is Guadalcanar, biggest and loftiest of the group.

Twenty-five years ago very little was known of it ; its population was estimated at perhaps 25,000. To-day the coast is a chain of coconut plantations, but inland is still unexplored. On the south-east lies long, lean Mala, with upwards of 60,000 folk. These people are the most virile and wildest of the South Solomons, though probably Rubiana in the north could rival Mala. From this island came, till 1904, the great bulk of the labour recruits taken to Queensland and Fiji for work on sugar plantations. It is of this island and its people that I shall have most to speak when I come to tell of native life. Out of sight further south lies another large island, San Cristoval, with perhaps 10,000 people on it. About 1900 these islands began to attract settlers in countable numbers. Previously hardly any white men, except a very few missionaries, had lived there.

These islands rise out of the ocean with their long, massive backbones very heavily wooded. From top to coast is one great forest of big timber, with dense undergrowth beneath the trees. Round the coasts lie patches of flat, swampy land ; occasionally these are flats of considerable acreage. But often there is only a narrow beach before the land begins to rise. The islands are valuable to the planter in proportion to their acreage of flat land. As you draw near to the land the dark mountainous mass begins to resolve itself into a more varied scene. First is seen the white line of surf as it surges against the coral breakwater. This white, massive barrier does not encircle the islands, but occurs here and there round the coast. It may run, as in Mala, for twenty miles

at a stretch. The distance from the breakwater to the shore may be two to three miles, or any lesser distance. Between coral reef and coast lies the wide, calm, shallow lagoon. At low tide only pools remain ; at high tide the whole is covered. These lagoons swarm with fish. At frequent intervals there is a break in the coral reef, wide enough to admit a boat or small ship, or even here and there a large ship, within the lagoon. Wherever a fresh water stream flows out into the lagoon you find such a break. The coral insect cannot build where the stream flows out. This is most convenient, for it provides plenty of access to the shelter of the lagoons. They are full of colour, and so, very beautiful—marine gardens such as only a tropical climate can show.

Crossing the reef, you search for a landing-place. The light green of the coconuts and the dark patch where the trees have been burnt tell of a village, and therefore a landing - place. Between such landing - places lie dark forbidding mangrove swamps. Their roots rise in a tangled mass, like coils of twisted snakes, out of the black, malodorous swamp, through whose ooze unsavoury streams crawl down to the sea. There will probably be crocodiles in those creeks. Overhead, above the mangroves, flit and scream innumerable cockatoos, and small parrots, glorious in red and blue, flash by, and vast flocks of pigeons coo from the tops of the highest trees. It is a dark, damp place, smelling of decay, and the sand flies, though so tiny, are many, and bite viciously. Mosquitoes, too, add their special welcome to any new arrival, with his rich

blood to banquet on. So we will return to the landing-place, and thence strike up inland. We pass through the coast village, with its bamboo and leaf huts, and reach the gardens lying beyond. A winding track through thick bush will bring us out after a mile or two on the cleared garden land, where grow yam, taro, kumera, breadfruit, bananas, pineapples, pawpaw or "mummy" apples, nut trees, green stuffs, and all that go to make a native garden. Beyond the clearing we plunge at once again into dense bush, through which narrow paths meander. There is only room for one on such a track, so narrow is it. All around is bush, where unseen eyes may be watching your progress. The track rises and falls as it crosses valleys, mountains, and streams, leading to the village gardens and bush lands of another tribe. From there again a belt of bush leads upwards, with many a descent and ascent, to the next tribe above. And so on, till unknown, untrodden virgin bush is reached at heights where no native dares to explore or wishes to live. From an aeroplane these tracks would, I imagine, look like vast spiders' webs stretching in all directions over the islands from village to village, and providing an exit down to the sea for even the highest and most distant tribes.

The life within the bush is abundant, especially of things creeping and creatures minute. Of big game there is none. Potting pigeons at they sit on the tree-tops or shooting a wild pig is the one approach to sport. The only indigenous quadruped, I believe, is the rat ; even the pig and the dog have come from without. So bird and insect life pre-

dominate. Here and there you come across snakes ; the natives know of poisonous ones, but they are rare ; the harmless whip snake is very common. Butterflies and moths, some of great size, flit all round you ; at night the so-called fireflies flash their torches everywhere—spirits of the dead, to be dreaded especially if they enter a hut. Insects swarm in countless millions : ants white, red, black ; ants that bite and sting ; ants that destroy houses, boxes, books, clothes ; ants that cover your food and can get through the tiniest crevice ; ants that do you service by devouring more obnoxious ants which are on and under every leaf and twig and grain of earth. Beneath any dead wood lying about centipedes are probably crawling, of all sizes from one inch in length up to ten. Their bite causes agony in proportion to their size. *Experto crede* the pain caused is extraordinarily severe and prolonged. I have known natives howl without ceasing for thirty hours after being bitten by a large centipede.

The flora of the bush is beautiful. You may find there rare orchids, cannas, bougainvillias, growing in all their bright glory whenever the bush gives them a chance ; their colouring is in proportion, compared with English flowers, to the greater brightness of the sun that lights them up, if it can find a path for its rays through the trees. Of scent there is little from the flowers, but there are plenty of fragrant herbs giving forth odours grateful to native nostrils.

The song of birds is not much heard. The raucous cry of the cockatoo and the booming note of pigeons are the predominating sounds. So numerous in some places are the white cockatoos that towards sunset

the tree-tops lining the coast are fringed white for many hundred yards by the vast flock that has chosen the spot to perch on. It looks as though there had been a fall of snow, or as if the sea had flung up to the tree-tops the spume of some tremendous surf.

All this life swarms in a climate that makes human life difficult to preserve at a healthy level. Sunrise and sunset, when the air is cool, and the sky clear, and a gentle breeze blowing, are unsurpassable in their charm, and then every sense is gratified. But between sunrise and sunset are the hot, damp days that exhaust and enervate. Fever, and probably dysentery, play their evil part, nerves get troublesome, and only change of climate can restore to health and vigour. But with many the fascination of the islands compels return, and their light and warmth are sought for as desirable things not to be matched elsewhere.

In calm weather, when the sea is gleaming with bright, unrippled surface, except where the fish leap or a turtle floats, or a school of porpoise is at play, when the south-east wind blows cool and gentle, and fever is not, and shade is near, and the recent rain is over, life is in one of its most charming environments. But in storm, when the pitiless roar of the wind will not cease for even one longed-for minute, and the rain is driving in great volumes of water, and the air reeks of damp swamp, and fever and ague are active, and there is neither light nor warmth nor any dry spot, and the houses shiver ready to fall, then life is one call to endure.

But whatever the conditions may be, whether for

good or ill, the white man is coming into these islands. The slow trickle is becoming a stream ; the stream, though there is a check just now in its flow, is like to become a river, and may become even a flood ; for the islands are rich in their productive powers, and desirable for the planting of much that has not yet been attempted. The times of romance and adventure are passing away. The day of development, exploitation, commerce is dawning, the white man is taking possession, and the natives have to accept it. Every year it gets more difficult to find the primitive native in his old surroundings. The most obscure little bush village uses some, at any rate, of the things the white man has brought, and there cannot be many places left where his face is unknown to at least some of the people. It is for them a tremendous fact that everywhere the steel axe, or knife, or adze has replaced the old stone implement. That means that their life is wholly, far too rapidly, changed. The primitive state is deplorable enough, but there is grave danger lest their latter state should be worse still.

So I invite you who take up this book to read, before it is too late, something of the Solomon Islander's ordinary life as he lived it untouched, and only very slightly affected by civilization ; before he was either a Christian or member of the English Empire ; while he was still living and believing as he lived and believed when Mendaña the Spaniard found the natives of the Solomon Islands and discovered to the world something of their ways and life.

C H A P T E R T W O

The Natives

SCIENTISTS whose studies are anthropological will, I suppose, continue to discuss, to the end of time, various theories as to the origin of the Solomon Islander. His first home has, I believe, been placed in every continent except Australia. Two races, Polynesian and Melanesian, meet, and are blended in varying proportion in the Solomon Islands. And behind them, it is thought, there has been another race, now lost or merged with invaders many centuries ago. In some outlying islands, such as Tikopia and Anuta, pure Polynesians are to be found. The Polynesian is taller, fairer, larger-limbed, though more delicate than the dark brown, short, square-built Melanesian. The Polynesians' hair is light and silky ; it flows down over his shoulders, or is piled up like a wheat sheaf on the top of his head. He is a lighter-hearted, more careless man than his somewhat sombre neighbour ; he is also less sturdy, less reliable, less capable of responsibility. The hair of the Melanesian is dark, and is combed up, and cropped into a thick, up-standing bush. Both races cut and trim and comb their hair assiduously, and are proud of a big, clean crop. The Melanesians' skin varies from light copper to almost black ; and, as they wear little or no clothing, the colour of the

skin makes this nakedness seem quite natural and befitting.

Melanesians are powerful men. They can carry immense weights, travel long distances on little food, and when excited perform astonishing feats of endurance. When there is no stimulus of excitement, or necessity to work, they are contentedly idle, but soon get bored and listless. They are excellent workers with axes, heavy knives, or mat-tocks. Both races are of weak constitution, especially the Polynesian, and succumb very rapidly to disease, particularly those of a tubercular or phthisical type; they are capable of dying of ennui, homesickness, and fright. Their features are often fine and handsome, but the Melanesian is more thick-lipped and of wider nostrils than the Polynesian. The mixture of the two races has left the Melanesian physique most in evidence, though somewhat refined by the Polynesian strain. Their eye is quick and their sight long; their observation is keen, their memories retentive, and their minds receptive. They have brains and abilities with which in due time, if rightly handled, they may assimilate, and not merely copy, a higher culture than their own. Their own long dwelling in primitive animism and naked cannibalism was not due to lack of brain power, but to an isolated environment that made progress impossible. In their intertribal affairs and policies they exercise very keen intelligence, and, allowing for the down-crushing influence of tribalism, they arranged their lives, especially their marriage law, with marked practical wisdom. Tribalism was the rock on which they were left stranded. To-day

they are being hauled off that rock, but the danger is lest the whole race should sink before the ship of rescue is ready to receive them.

A tribe means a family grown in a few generations to perhaps one hundred individuals living together in a village. After, and often before, numbering one hundred individuals there will be a split and another, probably friendly, village will be started. The old chief will still exercise indefinite authority over the new village, at any rate for some considerable time. An average village has only from thirty to eighty inhabitants. Each village has its friends in related villages, but all others are enemies, or at best hostile neutrals.

The languages of the villages, even on one island, are many and distinct. I remember asking an intelligent native soon after first landing on the island of Mala : " How many languages are there in use in this island ? " He began to count up on his fingers district by district, and finally announced, " There are fourteen big languages." I let it go at that, and did not press for the number of little ones. Each of these languages normally meant a number of tribes who lived apart, or on guard ready to attack, or expecting to be attacked, and only met to fight. They had to meet for exchange of produce, or to pass through each other's villages occasionally, but it would be either with a swaggering or a deprecating air, according to their respective strength. It was astonishing to find how often inhabitants of villages close to one another had never met. Each might go to villages many miles away, but they lived side by side hereditary enemies.

They might not even understand each other's language.

These people, remember, lived until recently without iron, in heavily wooded islands. Their tools were pointed sticks and stone adzes and axes. I know not how they could have done more than they did to secure a decent human livelihood. Think of the labour of cutting down one tree with a stone axe, of cultivating one garden with a pointed stick, and you will admire their industry and ingenuity. They learnt to cultivate their tribal land, to grow and harvest roots, and to plant and cultivate fruits. They learnt to cook food, sometimes making excellent and palatable dishes. They had to get fire by rubbing two sticks together. They learnt to build shelters to live in, fine and large, where there was moderate security for life, and security of tenure, poor and haphazard though it was, where there was continual uncertainty. They built canoes up to a size capable of carrying more than one hundred men ; they delighted to ornament the work of their hands, sometimes roughly and crudely, but often, especially when the objects were small, with infinite patience and skill and with a keen sense of beauty. They evolved and kept a marriage law of singular intricacy and of real eugenic value. And all this was accomplished in the most unpromising environment.

These islands were dark and heavily wooded ; their world was the island they lived on and possibly two or three others. Over this lay like an inverted cup the hard, iron-like vault of heaven, with holes through which to let in the light of sun and moon and star. (The people of Mota, in the Banks Islands,

called iron, when they first handled it, *tuka* ; they thought that it was a fragment of fallen "sky.") The little territory under this fixed vault where they lived was in some vague way the work of some dim ancestral spirit whose children they were. Perhaps the inhabitants of a few other villages, off-shoots from their own, also were children of the same *vui*. He it was, and innumerable other spirits, who brought them success in fighting, gardening, family affairs, and all the details of their life. If his "inside" was "good" all went well, unless, indeed, another stronger spirit was too much for him. If his "inside" was "smoky" or "scratched" all went ill. But there were also countless other spirits to appease by sacrifice or offering. And again there were innumerable objects, pieces of stone, wood, hair, food, toe or finger nails, or what not, with which was connected *mana*. One had *mana*, spiritual power, in sickness, another in a love affair, another in perils on the sea, another in fighting, another in fishing. Each man possessed some at least of these, or got them into his possession in time of need. These spirits and *mana*-endowed objects were tribal and local. They were of no use to another tribe, nor could they act probably on a man who had sought escape from a sickness by removal to another village. They were kept in good humour by sacrifices small and great. The utmost sacrifice was a human life. An enemy captured would be kept for great occasions ; and as a signal of complete triumph, where no revenge was feared, the body would be eaten, small portions of the cooked victim being sent to friends and allies. The victim's tribe

was thus deprived of all *mana*, and probably broke up and scattered whenever individuals could find a shelter. So they lived, thought, acted tribally, and progress was impossible. For tribalism crushes out individuality.

A strong character, of course, has influence in any kind of society, but tribal society keeps down the average individual at a very low level. It makes for individual timidity, and acquiescence in wrongdoing. A sufficient answer to all reproaches for a crime or any causing of trouble is to say "They" (the tribe) "did or willed it." The doer is merely the agent, who has neither choice nor responsibility. In or about 1918 or 1919 a white man getting labour on the coast of San Cristoval was killed by a blow from an axe that he had just sold. The man who killed him was after much trouble caught. It came out in evidence that a white man's head was wanted because of the death of a chief's son on a plantation. The man told off to do the deed when the chance came said to the chief when the signal was given, "Don't kill him ; he is a good master, and well-liked." But the signal was given in spite of the remonstrance, and the man struck the blow. He had no responsibility, no guilt in the matter. It was a tribal, not an individual, concern. It is interesting to see here the struggle between the rapidly growing individualism and the old tribal instinct. The killer was hung, as a good many have been hung lately for killings they have done in obedience to order. There rises a very uncomfortable feeling in thinking of it as to whether such men are murderers or not. Probably where tribal killings

of natives, or even white men, have to be dealt with, the most effective and lasting check would be to flog the chief. The tribe would lose *mana*, a thing to dread, not gain a hero, which is too often what happens.

Tribal land-holding plays its part in keeping the native depressed. It is rather against a man's interests to make the most of the piece of land he works. It belongs to the tribe really, and if he gets a surplus off it they will enjoy it. Or a man of a little more than average vigour starts to build a better hut than the villagers in general do. At once suspicions and jealousies are aroused ; he is "swanking," and the spirits do not like "swank"; or maybe he is hoping for the chief's rank at some not distant date, and that must not be. Ambition is naturally, therefore, tribal. It is shown by boasting of the chief's power, though personally he may have little influence ; of the tribe's canoe, or canoe house ; or the size and number of the village drums ; or the number of pigs slain for the feast—especially for the death feast.

The survival of tribalism, and its note of depression, may be seen in the distribution of the wages earned by the plantation hand. When he recruits for labour the tribe receive a present ; at the time of writing the present for each recruit is as much as £12 in value, a very heavy tax on the planter. But it falls in with native feeling, and will not be easy to abolish. The planter would like to do away with the present and raise the "boy's" wages above the 2s. 6d. a week scale ; 5s. a week is now the ordinary rate. That sounds fair and just. But there would still remain tribal feeling to be countered on the

boy's return ; for what he brings back has to be shared with all his tribe. He gets his turn, of course, when others come back, but the system must be a drag on personal ambition. It means that the seniors of the tribe send out their youngsters to earn money for the tribe. Each year, however, the " boy " is getting more self-assertive, and the system must give way in time.

Tribalism again affects the natives' domestic happiness, and makes a happy home an improbable, though not uncommon, exception. A girl is bought for a young man as his wife by joint tribal contributions. The arrangement may date back to infancy, or be a bargain made at marriageable age. The pair may not even have ever seen one another ; sometimes when they might, they do not take the trouble to do so. Some girl or other is wanted for some young man or other ; the personality or name of the parties is a secondary thing, not particularly interesting. What is interesting is the sums of monies that are given.

What then is the strong hold that tribalism has ? In primitive society it is the only way of securing any measure of protection for life, or property, or home. A tribe defends, shelters, feeds its members, and avenges their death or any damage done to them or the tribe concerned. A man may be a very troublesome member of his tribe, but they will not abandon him. There is one exception, and that is when a man is convicted, according to native thought, of practising witchcraft. In practically all other cases, whatever his offence, and however great a nuisance he is, they will fight for him, or pay a

fine for him in atonement for misconduct. So the braggart and bully has an unduly good time of it under tribal customs. He may thief, steal women, quarrel, blackmail, be a pest to his village by always keeping it in hot water. They may banish him for a time, scold him vigorously, and send him to Coventry, but they take his part, for all that, against all outsiders. His skin is very thick, his impudence is colossal, the broadest of hints fall quite unheeded ; he has tribal right to shelter and protection, and to them he will turn in extremity, when hunted by his enemies or those he has wronged. And the claim will be respected. Any one of his tribe may be killed for his misdeeds any day, but they will not secure peace by giving him up.

Again tribalism is a great protection to property. The Solomon Islander is, as a rule, an honest man, if he is not a Polynesian, but a Melanesian, up to a recognized standard. The tribe protects its property, and does not rob itself. You may borrow from your neighbour, but if you want to steal, go elsewhere. In the case of theft from a village it is not a personal but a tribal affair, and may easily start a tribal fight. So a man leaving his village will find his lightly closed hut intact on his return, though he may have been long away, and his garden will have been seen to, and any food eaten accounted for.

A white man travelling about with a boat's crew, and carrying a very varied assortment of desirable things, can leave them safely in the charge of his " boys." They will watch over them jealously. A loss of anything would be an affront to them all, and an insult to their dignity. Is he not, their white

man? The boat is "our" boat, the food, etc., "our" food, and every item of it all is stored in their retentive memories. This is a little bit troublesome in one way, for this joint possession seems to them to make it natural that they should inspect and handle every article, and, if among strangers, make the most of its value. If you resent this it must be because of some strange kink in your otherwise amiable character, for tribal life is very open and public. From birth to death the native is practically never alone, and any desire to be private is strange to him. When I used to live alone in Mala, I would sometimes, after my evening meal, settle down on my verandah with a book, and heave a sigh of content, in hope of a time to myself. Alas for my content! Some kindly native would often come creeping up on some feigned errand, just out of a neighbourly wish to cheer me up. I remember hearing two natives discussing a much loved white man. "He is a strange man," said one. "When he has his meals he likes to be alone, and sends us all away. Why do you think he does that?" "I don't know," said the other. Then, as solving the problem, "Do you think it can be because his food is holy?"

The Solomon Islander craves for companionship. If sent on an errand his first quest is for some one to go with him; if he steals out on some evil errand at night, a theft or a secret courtship, he takes a confederate with him to keep watch. Any man who is noted as one who likes to be by himself is an unpopular character. He must be morose, a plotter of witchcraft probably, or mad. A man who likes the

solitude of his own hut is thought to be guilty of concocting magic spells there. If you get a houseboy, his first thought is to get a mate to work with him. The mate will not ask for pay for himself, but acquires a sort of *jus successionis*, which he hands on in turn to a third when the senior departs. The post, whatever it is, houseboy, baker, cowboy—unless the master asserts himself—becomes tribal, a sort of family right.

Their ideas of justice, too, are tribal. There is no injustice to them in any individual of a tribe suffering for another's deed. The tribe has offended, and their main concern is to get off as lightly as possible by giving up, if they must give up some one, a weak or comparatively useless member of the tribe. The white man's persistent search for the actual criminal is not a little puzzling. In their own quarrels peace is often made by surrendering a child to be killed by the offended party, if possible a lame or diseased orphan. Surely a sensible plan, and economical withal!

Now, as is inevitable, tribalism is passing away. The higher individual culture is taking its place. But this is by no means always for good when the change is unnaturally rapid, and mainly exotic. When the tribe no longer buys the wife and assigns her to her owner as property to be well guarded, morality tends to become laxer. The young man who wishes to choose his wife, and does not wish to pay for her, may be of more advanced culture, but is not so trustworthy as the older man was in his day. The older man sees only theft and disorder in the claim to choose. Again a very real amount of

personal liberty was coexistent with tribalism. There is in primitive people a most markedly aggressive "Let me alone to do as I like" spirit, which tribalism restrains when it threatens public trouble, but otherwise encourages. This, when tribal restraints grow lax, leads to great confusion. The old men are not merely self-deceived *laudatores temporis acti* when they deplore the loose ways and impudence of the rising generation. There is a dangerous time when every man begins to do that which is right in his own eyes at home, only restrained by outside foreign law from open anarchy. The old *tapus* are becoming invalid, the growth of a better religion needs time to take its place in restraining from licence. Government control, when most effective, is still merely external pressure. Take the question of honesty, for example. Pride in personal honesty could hardly play much part in a tribal state; but the keeping of tribal laws was a point of honour. Take that away and you have a native, unless restrained by a new personal morality, or by fear of white man's law or wrath, who will steal as much as he dare.

After all, tribal culture has a dignity and beauty peculiar to itself. At first glance the old chief might be a dirty, naked native living in a dark, smoky hut, but he had an unadorned dignity of his own. He carried himself well, he could be very courteous, and was conscious that he was guardian of the tribal honour. The class of old men of the tribe was a pleasant feature of tribal life, for they enjoyed the great respect given to old age. To contradict an old man was not done. He lived on sure of outward

respect and of food and shelter. For in the old man class was stored much knowledge, and that commanded respect. But the old primitive lore and legend no longer has power over the youth of the tribe, and manners are not as good as they were. Another good point in the old culture was its vigour. Organized hard work was necessary to secure life and property. And what they had so painfully wrought out with stone axe and adze they loved to beautify and adorn, to plait over the spear, inlay the bowl or canoe, colour their utensils ; all this was a labour of love and required persistent skill. But now a few dropped coconuts, which perhaps they have not even gathered themselves, but left to a white man's boys or a Chinaman to collect, will buy a pot armlet from Birmingham, shiny and bright. And how can they realize the miserable inferiority of the Birmingham-made trash compared with the beautiful armlet that they once made with so much toil, less even, less shiny, but a real ornament and a thing of beauty. And so it is with all the things they used to make ; they are being replaced by cheap goods easily bought. A big canoe once took perhaps years to finish and adorn ; now a tribe club together and, through the agency of a white man, buy a boat, or even a small schooner, and despise the work of their own hands. Labour is saved, but that interest in life which keeps a race living is dying out, and the race dies out too.

The natives are between two perils. One is the danger of stagnation. They are in some places ceasing to care much to live. That which once absorbed them is forbidden, or they have learnt to

despise it. They are like children whose play is spoiled because some one has jeered at their simple toys. They quietly collapse, and die out. For they are a sensitive folk, and rough outside contact or comment hurts them deeply—more than they themselves know. The other danger is that of overstimulation. Civilization brings a confusion of new ways very bewildering. The bad is easiest to copy, the good is hard to acquire and apt to be too quickly assumed. The native needs much more time to assimilate what he is face to face with so suddenly. There is needed a slowing down of the impact if there is to be left to a race, naturally kindly, gentle, courteous, and intelligent, a fair hope of a happy, useful life in his own islands.

C H A P T E R T H R E E

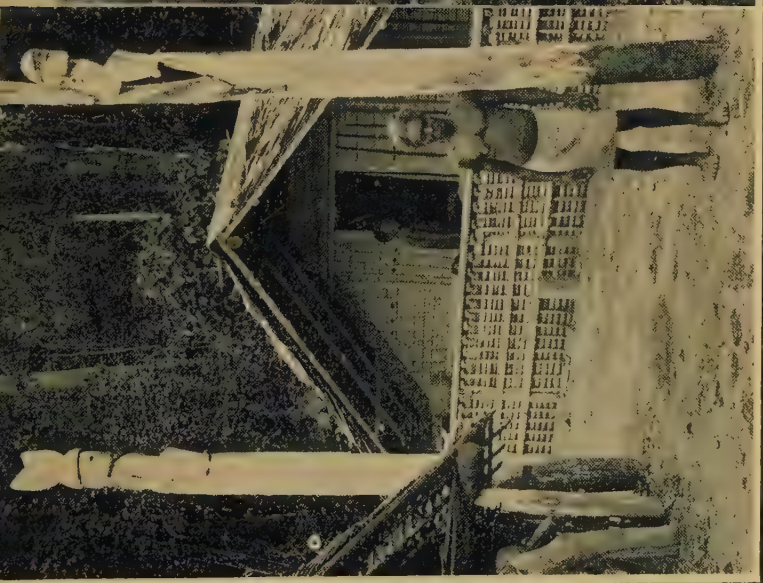
Village Life

THE smallness of a Solomon Island village is a marked feature of native life. Villages in the bush number from a dozen up to perhaps fifty souls. On the coast they may attain to a hundred inhabitants; on the small islets, man-made off the coast, on which they pack themselves for safety, as many as four hundred may be found. When you propose a visit to a bush village you expect to find a place of about thirty people living in three or four huts. There will be certainly one, probably two, "big men," "men of note," commonly called "chiefs," with perhaps three or four *arais*, or "elders" or married men. As a rule you will find they live monogamously, but a chief will probably have additional wives. A few others also *may* have more than one.

In some islands the wife's sister was a second wife almost as a right. There will be the survivors of a family; nowadays only one or two children seem to survive. In a former generation families were often large. Five or six brothers and four or five married sisters among the old folk are to be found fairly often, but this no longer obtains. These families occupy a small hut in the bush, very small and rude, and round the huts is a small clearing. You may often find a glorious banyan tree in the

centre of the village ; a delightfully shady resting-place is to be found under its branches. Round the clearing lies dense bush, pierced only by narrow exit tracks. These tracks lead to the garden land, and into other tracks somewhat wider that connect villages with the coast.

The site of such a village is often and easily changed. Their first thought when in fear or trouble is to move elsewhere. A few days will put up the huts in a new clearing ; they are more like dog kennels than houses, in the deep bush. The making of new gardens is a bigger enterprise, but not a very formidable one. These constant movings are good. It means moving away from soil that would soon begin to be contaminated, and it entails breaking up fresh land, and leaving that which is becoming "idle," as they say, from too much cultivation. Fresh yam is planted, bananas put in, in a damp hollow perhaps a taro patch, pine-apples, and if they are lucky as to site there will be a stream hard by, and swampy land good for the growth of sago palm and betel nut. They generally choose a hill-top for a village, or a small plateau ; in time of danger they descend into the hollows and lurk there till they feel it safe to return. In many villages in Mala a very strong stockade surrounded the village and they live entrenched there. Life is easily sustained without very strenuous toil in such primitive surroundings. But they often endure hungry times, for their tenure of garden is very uncertain, and on the death of a chief an orgy of destruction of roots, plants, and trees sets in, which keeps them down to bare subsistence level, with occasional feastings.



SACRED POSTS.

The two posts outside the men's house at Ugi are not idols, but had once "mana" no doubt attached to them. They are mainly ornamental.



A FORTRESS.

The night refuge and daily camp of a small tribe in Mala. Note the narrow easily closed entrance. The hut into which it leads is the chief's home. It is built out on rocks jutting out into the sea. The bush enemy must therefore risk a frontal attack, which he will not willingly do.

The state of an island, as to peace and progress, may be roughly diagnosed by the coconut trees you see, and the amount of yams it produces. The average Mala bush village produces very little, but has to go far afield to more settled districts for its luxuries, coconuts, betel nut, and perhaps bread-fruit.

It may be as well under the heading of " Village Life " to tell of village food, for the growing, cooking, and eating of their foodstuffs is, after all, the main element in their lives. The yam takes first place perhaps as a food. In the Solomon Islands it is grown from the " eye " pieces cut from the ripe yam, planted, and left to shape itself in the soil. The result is a large root of spread-out, broad shape, looking like an overgrown, fantastic potato. In taste it has not much flavour. In texture it is firm, not watery, and is a first-rate and nutritious food. It is planted generally about June or July, and the crop harvested about Easter. It is well not to plant yams twice running in the same ground. The yam, properly dug, with skin unbroken, can be stored away, and keeps good for a very long time. The native way of cooking was on hot stone, the root wrapped in leaves, an excellent method. Now they generally boil the yam, more or less, resulting in the loss of its flavour and goodness as food ; but it is an easier method. A considerable amount of green vegetable of the nature of spinach is also planted ; it is very oily and rich, and is generally eaten with coconut milk. Next to yams ranks the much enjoyed, swamp-loving, round, highly coloured, turnip-like root that they call *geta*. Its flavour is its

own. It is very good food, though somewhat stodgy, and you like it very much, roasted with butter, or dislike it. The natives use it cooked in the native oven, boiled, and mashed up with nuts. This mash is a luxury, and is quite good eating. The sticks that mash the *qeta* are kept for that purpose only, as are the bowls in which it is mashed, so it is cleanly fare. The third main root food, an introduced one, is the *kumera*—a sweet potato. The latter name describes it sufficiently. Two crops of this root can be obtained within a year, so it is a very popular in-between crop. Neither *qeta* nor *kumera* can be stored up for use, but they can be planted all the year round, so harvesting need not be necessary if the planting is fairly continuous.

Though they live mainly on these three roots, there is a considerable variety of other edibles, in spite of their wasteful and happy-go-lucky method of cultivation. They plant bananas and leave them to produce fruit, giving very little heed to weeding or tending. In one way or another they have a great variety of bananas of all sizes and flavours to supplement their root foods, for banana is an extra, not a staple, food. A dozen may be added to a meal, just as an additional snack.

The sago palm is found in wet hollows. Happy is the village that owns a grove. The white men buy the nuts, which would otherwise be valueless, to make buttons, I believe. The leaf is the chief material for roofing the huts, and is therefore in constant demand. A village that has no sago palm has to buy or go roofless, or with very inferior grass substitutes. For a small pig enough can be

bought to thatch a small hut. The broad leaves are tied up in bundles of one hundred for portorage and sale. The trunk of this tall, graceful palm contains sago. It is soft, fibrous wood, but the bark can be stripped off and split into very narrow strips about three to four inches wide. These strips are very commonly used for walls, and also, in more advanced villages, for floors, or platforms running along the side of the hut. There still remains the pith of this tree. It is full of sago. The natives have never cared to extract the sago, and do not want to learn ; but in hungry times you may see them carrying about great chunks of sago palm, and chewing it. Of course, they swallow quite a lot of tough fibre in this way, and, children especially, swell visibly under the unpopular diet. But they still go on refusing to learn to extract the sago. In this they are behind their cousins of New Guinea.

Further away, scattered about the bush, are jealously guarded nut trees. It is a happy time with the natives when they all go gathering nuts in May, or about May. The nut—*näli* is its name—has a very hard shell and very oily flesh ; it is about the size of a filbert. Its flavour is excellent, but caution in its use is necessary, for it is a very rich food. The natives gather the harvest and carry it back to the village. Then for many days you may hear all day long the cheerful sounds of the cracking of the shells. A particularly hard black stone is used for this purpose. The kernels are stored in lengths of bamboo, and cooked in the bamboo case over the fire. The blackened bamboos are then stowed away in the roofs of the huts, and used as required for

festal cookings. The nuts thus cooked will keep indefinitely in the closed bamboo.

Another palm which generally grows side by side with the sago palm is the tree that produces the much loved betel nut. Visitors from a betel nut-growing village are very welcome. Their bags are instantly dived into by the eager fingers of the village in need, and the small, round, red, fiercely hot nut extracted. It is always chewed together with the leaf of the pepper tree, and with lime made from coral. Nearly every native chews the mixture daily and very frequently. It is a stimulant, and no doubt supplies a need. It seems to have some food value, for they can go on this mixture for very many hours. A few chew to excess. They get heavy and dazed, their eyes glaze over, and their skin streams with perspiration. But I have come across very few cases of victims of this habit; in general, it seems more useful than harmful. *Æsthetically* considered it is horrible, for the betel nut-chewer's teeth go black, his lips are smeared a dull red, and as he chews a continual stream of red saliva trickles from his mouth.

In the gardens you will find also a few additions to indigenous products. Pineapples and mummy apples grow very freely. If you fancy the pineapple you are eating, all you have to do is to cut off the head and stick it in the ground to grow another. Pineapples make neat path borders. The mummy apple or pawpaw is a soft, yellow-coloured, rather tasteless fruit. It makes, when green, an excellent boiled vegetable; when ripe, a most wholesome fruit. The seed, with a nasturtium-like flavour, is the most

interesting part of this good food. The seeds are pure pepsin, and make an excellent digestive. For some strange reason both natives and white men scrape out the seeds, which are massed in the midst of the fruit. The white man then looks about for a lime to squeeze over the fruit to give it flavour. A few of the seeds kept to flavour the fruit would do far better. As soon as ever bush is cleared innumerable mummy apple trees spring up. They have been brought from the West Indies, I believe, and certainly prosper in their alien home. Lime trees do well in most places, but the natives rarely grow them. Oranges can be grown, but are apt to be stringy and dry ; they never do really well.

Now, from the gardens let us pass into the village, and have a look at the native life. A village used to take some getting into twenty years ago in Mala. On my first arrival, though I had a friend known to its people with me to lead the way, women and children would run screaming and yelling into their huts. The divings to get first through the two-foot high door were exceedingly comic. The men would stand by armed, relaxing slowly into individual acceptance of the stranger. The first man, of course, to be greeted was the chief, who was often a man of very courteous manners. If soon after your arrival food was brought to you and to your companions, you knew that all was well. And as a matter of fact no village that once accepted me in this way ever acted treacherously. If there was trouble over some of their wild doings, it was open, and nearly in every case temporary. An invitation into the chief's hut is soon given. It is dark, low,

and smoky. There are a few mats on the earth floor. A fire with a few live wooden faggots smoulders in the middle. The dark-skinned, naked forms of the older men group themselves round.

Their ornaments in hair, round forehead, in nose, through nostril, in ears, on chest, on arms, legs, neck, vary according to the greatness of the occasion. If they are in a time of fighting or feasting, they will be very many. The chief wears but few. His dignity is generally unadorned. All the men, except the chief, carry weapons. A few guns are in the hands of their proud possessors, probably loaded, very carelessly handled. Others carry clubs or bundles of spears ; a very few, bows and arrows. On your second visit, unless a fight is on, you will see hardly a weapon or an ornament. Above one end of the hut is a dark chamber formed by a bamboo platform across the roof. Here are stowed away a smoke-blackened, varied collection of tribal articles. A drum, or two or three drums of various sizes ; odd weapons ; food bowls, in sizes from a bath to a pudding dish ; carved grotesque figures, not idols, but objects possessing *mana*. The hut may have a small chamber at the back, where are kept the strings of shell money and collars of porpoise teeth that constitute the tribal wealth. If there is no separate sacred house, up in the roof will be placed the most precious of all possessions, an ancestral skull.

If the village be small one skull only may suffice to represent the prestige of the tribe. I remember well the extreme distress of a chief, and his sense of being crushingly dealt with, when his village was fired as a penalty for his share in aiding in a killing

for witchcraft. The total destruction of his village was a very small affair. But in the conflagration the careless white man had allowed, unwittingly, his grandfather's skull to be consumed. Two or three days' work, by the aid of some borrowed knives, would replace the village, so rude and small were the huts, but the loss of the skull was irreparable ; his *mana* prestige was very grievously weakened, if not destroyed. It was a toss-up whether he would accept the blow, or whether he would plan some extraordinarily daring somewhere to recover his *mana*. The loan of a few knives turned the scales in favour of peace !

While the chief entertains his visitors for a while, the women and children, quite naked in the bush, creep out of the huts, and begin to come as near as they dare. Of course, no woman can set foot in or come too near the men's house when the visitors are being entertained, but they can come within sight and hearing. The entertainment of visitors is of great interest, for much of the bush man's life is passed in paying and receiving visits. The smallest pretext will serve to make up a party to go to a neighbouring village to pass away the day ; very likely they will stay a night or so, unless very plainly sent home before dark.

But there is work to be done, and some days, and not so very few either, have to be given up to that. If you enter a village after nine o'clock, when all is quiet around, you will perhaps find only one sick man in the place, but often not a soul is to be seen. The women are all in the gardens or off to market, and the children with them. The bigger boys are

following the men, who are at their work, tree-felling, or getting material in the bush for many different kinds of work, or breaking up new ground for a garden, or conveying, under arms, the women to market, or any of a thousand affairs that occupy their time. About three o'clock they begin to return. Food, water, firewood is brought in by the women, and fish from the market-place on the shore ; the men arrive perhaps with materials for making weapons, or utensils, or ornaments, or for repairing their homes. The oven, a round hole in the earth, is filled with firewood, and the stones, kept ready near by, piled on. The food, wrapped in leaves, is placed on the hot stones when the fire is burnt out, and all covered over with piles of fresh leaves. They know to a nicety when the yam, taro, or whatever it is will be cooked, then the oven is opened, and the one fixed meal of the day is taken. Darkness follows, except where fires flare up as some one acts the part of bellows ; out of the darkness a hum of voices comes, and the smell of many oft-lighted pipes, as the smokers sit and lie round the fire. On moonlight nights they indulge in an hour or two of play in the open space between the huts ; the children romp, and the elders, if so disposed, show them how to shoot an arrow, throw a spear, and so forth. Sleep then claims them for a few hours, but never all at the same time. Every two or three hours slumberers awake, light their pipes, and yarn together round the blown-up fire.

If there is fear of an attack singing will be kept up all the night, so that the enemy lurking near may know that they are on the alert, and fear to attack. But

by about four o'clock there is dead silence and heavy sleep. Native etiquette allows shouting, but personally shaking a sleeper is keenly resented. To do so is to risk an exasperated attack from the startled, resentful sleeper. A timid, gentle call unheard is the most close attempt with an equal or superior. Then dawn creeps into the darkened huts. The children are the first to stir under their mats, doors are opened, and smoke emerges through the opening, followed by ash-covered figures. Pipes are lit, scraps of cold food swallowed ; the women go off to their day's work, and the men follow gradually. Any that are sick lie on ; by their mats some food is laid—cold and indigestible, but still food—and a bamboo water-holder. By ten o'clock the village is once more silent and deserted.

The women's life is a monotonous and dreary one. They have all the burden-bearing to do, and a small share of the pleasures to enjoy. The babies seem to cry all night, and all day are carried about by the mother with her other burdens. A good-natured or lazy father will sometimes stay at home and act as nurse when the children are old enough, otherwise the mother has perhaps one at the breast, one on the hip, one clutching at her hand, a huge bundle on her head, and a day's work in the garden to do, with a great load of food, firewood, and water to bring back. That infanticide should be practised, or even worse practices followed, is hardly wonderful. The bush woman, left in her native state, lives very little above a merely animal existence. She is naturally extremely credulous, absurdly jealous, and crassly conservative ; she can become under training

and sympathy a self-respecting mother, with an affectionate husband, a moderately equipped home, and a well-brought-up family. Few attain to this, but many are rising towards it. The women live under a thick cloud of *tapus* and superstitious obsessions, which their little used brains make them very slow to shake off. And yet it would be a poor village indeed in which you did not find, even in the deepest bush, some woman of character and influence who carried weight in the informal village councils. I have been told by a white man, who has penetrated deeper into native life in the Solomon Islands than any before him, by living at times the actual native life among them, that the main discovery he made, as he gained the confidence of the islanders, whose language he knew thoroughly, showed how great the women's influence was in village affairs and councils. In the day they are slaves to carry and toil; but at night their voices are heard, and listened to, as the villagers sit about engaged in their interminable discussions on the minutest events of their lives.

As one is learning the language one is apt to think that they have very few subjects to talk about. A few words seem to recur again and again. There remain most prominently in my memory "money," "marriage," "killing," "fighting," "pigs," "tobacco," "market," "spirits," and all of these seemed eventually to return to the money point of view as the principal thing. Of course, by and by it becomes obvious that their interests are more varied, and their vocabulary not quite so restricted; but certainly a very large part of their life is centred on these great interests. And in

most of these interests the women's share is a passive one to outward appearances. The reality may be very different.

At the end of the villagers' day the children become more prominent. It is a good sign, as well as a cheerful sight, when, in the moonlight, the children are noisily at play. They have regular games, but more often just romp about in graceful, naked abandon. It means that the whole village feels for the moment at ease and in peace. The bright moonlight secures them against surprise, and spirits do not lurk, as in the darkness, in every corner. It is cool, too, and pleasant on the open ground where all gather.

Life in the coast villages, of which more in detail later on, is much the same in essentials, but a fuller and freer one. The coast people in Mala live mainly off the mainland on little islets made by themselves. In other islands they have their villages by the sea-shore round the bays and harbours. Their sea life, the work of fishing, and their closer contact with the outer world, make them on the average healthier and more intelligent than the bush folk. If a tribe wishes to rise from their primitive bush estate, their first step, in most islands, is to come down to the coast, if they can find a place to come to. The difficulty is to find a place that will allow of land for gardens. It is practicable only where a man who owns the land by tribal right is willing to invite others to settle with him.

There is naturally a state of unending feud between coast and bush. But their inveterate inbred hostility is breaking down. As islands get opened up

the bush men come coastwards more freely, the coast men go inland more often, they get to know each other, and in mission villages learn to live together in one community, though still in well-marked sub-divisions ; one village I knew had four of such tribes within a tribe. The feud between coast and bush presumably dates back to the days when new arrivals had to make good their landing and position. And yet coast and bush must have freely intermingled, for any racial differences are sometimes difficult to detect. Most of them seem to be accounted for by the facts of their very diverse environment. The bush man is an agriculturist who wants free access to the sea ; the coast man is a fisherman who wants to cultivate his own garden. The easiest solution of their difficulties is inter-marriage, which is becoming increasingly frequent. For example, a cousin of a sea chief wants to establish himself ashore. He will arrange to buy a wife from the bush chief holding the track down to the place where he wants to settle. Then he will start his community. There will be trouble at first, but by alliance with his father-in-law's tribe he hopes to hold his own and get established. In the next generation his daughter will be married in her turn into a tribe allied to her mother's, and his son to a sea tribe, so the alliance will become a strong one. The community will have received from time to time relations of his, and of his wife's. Each will build huts in their separate quarter of the village, their gardens will be different, and their own affairs separate. Each section will follow its own chief as head, elected *ad hoc* very probably. But as a village

they will act together. If such a village is a " school " one, the church and school will form a centre of union for both parties, and tribalism can slowly and almost painlessly pass on to a more advanced stage of culture.

C H A P T E R F O U R

Arts, Crafts, and Professions

I N the daily life of the Solomon Islander there is plenty of work to be done in order to live a decent, comfortable, seemly native life. To most of his wants his own hands must minister, but there are certain arts and crafts that only a few practise, and this work must be paid for. Some of the more important native work, such as house-building, canoe-making, will be discussed later; this chapter is a general one on various native arts, crafts, and professions. There is the work that all may do, and some of which all must do, to be first discussed. Some of it is necessary or useful, and some of it artistic, done to satisfy the human craving for making something pretty. Tastes differ, but as to the real beauty and artistry of some of the island work there can be only one opinion. Their bamboo plaiting, bead work, bags, ornamentation of ear sticks, fish hooks, and, above all, their inlaid work in mother-of-pearl, is of real beauty and admirable.

In some of this work all may share. Any native may go out to the tribal territory and cut down for himself a tree there—except a food tree—or gather from the bush anything he needs for his work. Before the introduction of iron the labour of making the simplest utensil or weapon must have been great and the task long, and the pride of achievement

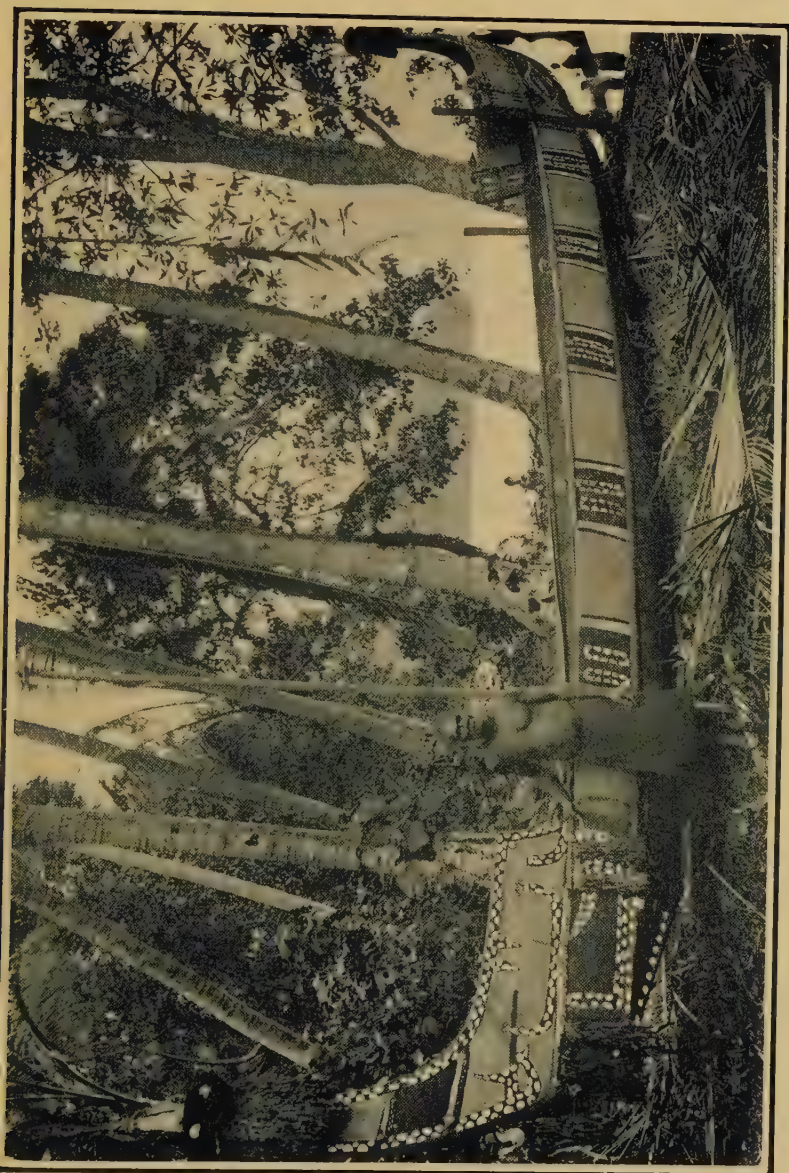
considerable. Now the axe, knife, and adze, of iron instead of stone, have made the ordinary work far easier, quicker, and not so well worth perfecting. The native life loses much healthy interest, and so far it cannot be said that any new work introduced by the white man is anything like as useful or interesting or artistic.

We found our native—twenty years ago—cutting down a tree with, we will suppose, a newly acquired axe, for the stone age passed very quickly away some fifty years ago. Once the tree is down his favourite tool is the adze. In any fair-sized village you will hear the chip-chip-chipping of the adze on the log brought home. It may be a bowl in the making, from possibly six feet down to six inches in length. It may be that several men are engaged on adzing out planks for the skilled canoe-maker, or they may be preparing posts for the building of a hut the size of a big dog kennel, or up to the height of one lofty canoe houses of Gela, or the modern native church buildings capable of holding five or six hundred people.

The labourer may be engaged in making weapons. He may—though rarely nowadays—be fashioning a bow bendable only by a strong man ; or he may be showing a child how to make so tiny a weapon that even small birds would hardly trouble to avoid the reed arrows discharged from its slender frame. He may be slowly chipping a big log into a roughly hewn club, either the long club some five feet in length for more distant fighting, or the deadly eighteen-inch club with its double edge of hard, ebony-like wood, meant to strike a surprise blow,

a fatal one at close quarters ; or he may be rough-hewing an ornamental club for use in the dance he loves so dearly. The long sticks that he throws with a thud on the ground outside his hut may have been taken from the special tree that provides suitable wood for spears. A spear is eight to ten feet in length, slender and light. It is ornamented with coloured grass woven into intricate patterns at the maker's discretion. The point is sharp, and there are needle-like barbs pointing backwards to the handle bristling round the spear's point, which make a spear wound serious. The whole head of the spear (held by these reversed points) remains embedded in the flesh and must be cut out. Very rarely nowadays will an artist, having shaped a shield, be seen engaged in adorning its whole outer surface with red and yellow plaited work of grass. These shields are small and light, and are used to catch or deflect arrow or spear. The large shield of bark protecting the whole body is no longer made, and possibly none exists. I have seen one only, and that was so old that it crumbled to pieces in the house. The natives seemed to know of none other, though they knew of many that had been used in past days.

Possibly a new village drum is needed, and the chief is ambitious to eclipse the largest one within local knowledge, so a big tree and much adzing are necessary before the artist takes it in hand to fashion the slit in the hollow cylinder that will make it resound to far-off villages. The drum is a very special treasure, generally kept in the chief's house under his control. It is safer so. I remember great trouble being caused once by an irresponsible, hot-



A SAN CRISTOVAL CANOE. An example of the ornamented inlet shell work on their state canoes. Under the coconut trees is a favourite place of shelter. The cocoa nut fronds on the ground protect the canoe from the sun when not in use.

headed young man rushing to the village drum, left unguarded, and drumming out the first notes of a terrific curse. Happily he was stopped just in time, and the rude drum sticks taken from him. A few more strokes would have made apology useless. The curse was meant for a neighbouring village, two of whose members had helped themselves to bananas in passing through the hot-head's garden. He, in a rage, was beginning to beat out what I was told was "a big fellow swear too much altogether," which could end only in bloodshed.

Some natives, as they sit about the village, lavish much time on fashioning ornaments. The making of a comb is fascinating work, and a light job for clever fingers. The thin piece of wood has to be carefully fashioned into shape, and then delicately split into narrow teeth down to the base or handle. Next comes the plaiting work covering the handle with a small, intricate pattern of coloured grass, or an inlaid mother-of-pearl surface in tiny tessellated work. Ear sticks are another work of art; an ear stick is a very light piece of plaited work, beautiful in design. The stick is about six to eight inches in length, and is made to go through a hole in the lobe of the ear.

Shell work is a Solomon Island specialty. All kinds of ornaments, as well as native money, are made of shell. There are still a few tiny shell fish-hooks made of mother-of-pearl and turtle-shell to be seen. They are very little used now, and the art of making is almost dead. Of clam-shell is made larger ornaments, discs, ornamented with superimposed turtle-shell in filagree work, to be hung on

the breast, heavy rings for arms or legs, light bangles, thin, pointed five and six-inch shell sticks to be worn through the cartilage of the nose, and many like articles.

But the most artistic work of all done in the Solomon Islands is the inlaid mother-of-pearl work. Any surface of wood from a tiny cross to a war canoe can be, and is, inlaid. Clubs, posts of houses, food bowls are all made beautiful in this way. There are certain skilled men who know the old patterns, and some can work out clever new ones. A very favourite design is the frigate bird. The tessellated pieces are inset into the wood, and fastened in by a glue obtained from a nut called *saea*. There is endless scope for ingenuity and taste and dexterity of fingering in the inlaid work. Everything possible should be done to encourage the art.

Harder work, and some of it skilled work, too, of which more in detail later, is entailed by house-building and repairing. There are the individual huts needing constant attention and renewal, and also the tribal canoe huts or the skull houses; the chief's hut is a tribal affair also. Tribal building is most commonly paid for by a series of feasts given by the chief, whose goods are really a tribal possession, though at his disposal. Each stage of building entails a feast; thus energy is rearoused to begin the next stage. Very often the final feast is given when the end is in sight to spur on the workers to finish the task. The result is a long delay and work often left unfinished for months, or never completed at all. The building of native churches in Christian villages is a valuable test of the energy

of the people. Some churches have recently been built with low walls of sawn coral stone blocks. This is very laborious work, and only attempted by the more ambitious villages, where there is an energetic, forceful leader.

The general work of the community is strictly divided between the men and the women. To the woman falls unskilled work, gardening, burden-bearing, cooking—though men often cook for themselves—gathering shell-fish, mat-making, and basket-weaving. The men clear the land, plant and gather in the root-crops, do the net-making for fishing, go pig-hunting, and follow other masculine “ploys.” The men’s work again is specialized, though the professions and crafts are still in a rudimentary stage of differentiation. There are craftsmen who plait split bamboo into certain patterns known only to themselves. The ordinary cross-plaiting anyone can do, but if special work is required an artist has to be hired. He lives in the village till his work is finished. The artistic temperament in the Solomon Islands, as elsewhere, cannot be hurried to complete a job, or tied to fixed hours. So the visit is often a prolonged one, and needs a very broad hint to bring it to a conclusion. These interlaced split bamboos are used for the fronts of big or important huts, or for partitions. Part of the bamboo is coloured black, the rest left its natural light yellow, and by interlacing certain patterns are formed, which are taught to apprentices only for a consideration.

Canoe-making is a special work. The ordinary coast native can make a canoe of sorts, but if a good one is required he will hire a specialist at the work.

The canoe-maker seems never to suffer from lack of employment, and can pick his job. He often has an apprentice, a son or relative, to whom he teaches the nuances of the trade. The usual payment is per seating capacity. At the large tribal canoe all work, but two or three specialists direct and finish it off. The tribal canoe is paid for by visits of ceremony to neighbouring villages; each village honoured by a first call is expected, almost compelled, to pay a fairly heavy sum for the privilege. They generally pay up cheerfully, hoping for the day when their turn will come, and they will have a quasi-right to receive a sum equivalent to that which they gave. This applies to villages of approximately equal importance and size. To smaller places the maxim "The minority must suffer" applies in fullest force. They give in proportion largely with small hope of return.

Another distinct profession is that of *mwane ramo*, or strong man. These men may be divided into two classes, the village fighting man, who lives the ordinary village life, and the professional fighting man, who roams about the bush, with no village, but a large number of shelters scattered here and there in his district. Most chiefs have two or three strong men attached to them. They lead the village expeditions and carry the chief's messages and demands. A truculent manner, a loud voice, and the prestige gained by a killing done perhaps years before are the chief qualifications for the profession. They are a good deal feared, and seldom attacked. When once their reputation is established they live on it for the rest of their lives. They do no

work, but exist comfortably by extortion. They are fed and sheltered free gratis. Gradually they become less active and truculent, and end their days as respectable, experienced *arai*—village elders. They are often good-natured, kind-hearted, humorous folk, more active and enterprising than the average native.

Above the village strong man ranks the district professional murderer. He is a man who in early youth perhaps has killed a man and fled to the bush. There he will attach himself to the local chief of the profession, and eventually become a chief murderer himself. These men live in bands of about ten, roaming the bush. They are always on hire to do a killing, and, by activity, swiftness of attack and flight, establish a reputation. The heads of the profession are names to conjure with, and villages tremble at their coming. The head of them all in my time, one Iroqata by name, was credited with over one hundred personal killings, and commanded a big price per job. But these men must not be looked upon as merely ruthless blood-thirsty assassins. They are not that. Greed and ambition for fame may mar otherwise fine men. They are in a crude society a sort of police. Most of the people they are hired to kill are men accused, and in natives eyes guilty, of the crime of witchcraft, and worthy of death. The *mwane ramo* is the professional executioner. Also, after a rough fashion, these men adjust tribal quarrels. They make peace as well as war, and are go-betweens in adjusting differences. Every such difference adjusted means money payment, of which, of course, they take their share.

I have also come across a few cases of marauding bands, professional Ishmaels, who roamed about the bush, not waiting to be hired, but helping themselves to what they wanted from the gardens through which they passed at night, and camping by day deep in the bush. But the day of the *mwane ramo* is over, and he is evolving into the "police-boy," a smart, uniformed, well-drilled fellow, hardened by experience and discipline. The best of these are of the "strong man" class. There is also the new figure of the village policeman, who is generally the chief of the tribe. He is a little misty as to his duties, and his tendency to use his office to extort money has to be kept sternly in check. His eyes are somewhat of a magnifying glass when turned on neighbouring villages and their offenders, but microscopic when his own village or tribal connections are in view. To exercise authority and not profit personally by it is a lesson that it will take time to learn. The *mana*—prestige—of the *mwane ramo* is passing, and Government *mana* is taking its place. The more natural the process the better for the people, but time must be allowed for a healthy development.

Another profession is that of "witch-doctor"; the pidgin English name for him is "priest" or "high priest." Solomon Islanders returning from Fiji have, I believe, introduced the name. This man's functions are various and of great importance in the people's lives. As an individual the witch-doctor does not seem to have any special prestige or influence. At any rate, there are few outward signs of it. It is possible to be in a village quite a long time and see daily the witch-doctor without knowing

of his office. He mixes among the villagers as one of themselves outwardly. But in the exercise of his office he is of very great importance in their lives. He is, or may be, both priest and doctor ; his *mana* is not personal, but attached to his knowledge of incantations, charms, and witchcraft. He is called on in sickness, and does sometimes, by knowledge of herbs or by massage, do useful work ; in a rough way he attempts surgical operations, and sometimes is successful. But any success is attributed by him and others not to any skill or knowledge, but to his use, with the herb or medicine, of the right charm. The vexed spirit is propitiated thereby and all goes well. If he fails, it is because the influence of a hostile spirit is stronger than that of the spirit invoked. This is not his fault, but a misfortune due to some enemy who must be found out.

The witch-doctor's services are in constant requisition. He makes rain or sunshine ; that is, he leads the petitions for fine or wet weather, usually in the bush, at some sacred place. He sends forth at the propitious moment, with prayers to the spirits for success, the new canoe, or the fighting, or fishing, or porpoise-hunting expedition. His incantations are awaited before the bush man plants or reaps. He is sought after for love charms, or money charms, or charms that make invisible in fight, or give courage to strike the sudden blow, or to face the enemy. He directs the sacrifices, and tells the amount needed to appease the spirit of an ancestor who has been perhaps neglected. Above all, he is called in to find out who has been the cause of death ; every death must have been caused by some one, a secret or open

enemy. It is the witch-doctor's business to find out the tribe or individual concerned, and expose the secret practiser of witchcraft, whom only the "priest's" charms can find out. The education of these men begins early. As boys they are attached to a witch-doctor, live under his control and are taught by him his lore. They have to learn the proper charms for all sorts and conditions of natives ; they learn, too, bush lore, and what herbs, leaves, concoctions are potent for various purposes.

As far as I am aware, the Solomon Islands does not indulge to the extent that the natives of Central African tribes do in nauseous and strange compounds. His remedies seem comparatively few and simple. There is probably a certain amount of sleight-of-hand and jugglery to learn. For instance, stones are shown in the witch-doctor's hand, supposed to be extracted from the interior of the patient, and other tricks are played on credulous sufferers that increase his belief in magic ; but, on the whole, if one compares Solomon Island practitioners with what is known of the practices of other primitive people, the magic here is not of so horrible and terrifying a nature. The witch-doctor is not feared as a rule except by those apprehensive of being accused of witchcraft. Far more feared is the unknown supposed secret practiser of witchcraft.

Another office of the witch-doctor—if one must so call him—is the charge of the village sacred hut. This is built apart from the village in a small enclosure. There is usually an altar of stones in the enclosure and a hut for the "priest." Only he may enter the sacred hut ; it is *tapu* to all others. I have

never been able to get inside one of these huts, but I am told that there is nothing inside except the skulls of the tribe's forefathers, the most venerated of all sacred objects. In some cases, in very small tribes, a venerated skull may be kept in the chief's hut. There is also often to be found outside the chief's hut an altar of stones. No woman may enter any such enclosure, though the men show the altar no particular respect as they sit and smoke and yarn and work at small jobs in its vicinity. Like all native professions, that of witch-doctor is passing away. The native now resorts for healing to the nearest white man, or listens to the lore of a fellow native who has learnt perhaps a little elementary bandaging and hygiene from white men, or has a few simple remedies in his possession.

I remember once being asked to devote a few minutes to tell a party of coast men how to use a whole medicine chest taken from a derelict schooner. They obviously attributed great *mana* to the many and various bottles, and wanted to learn their use straight off. As a large number of the bottles—and sea medicine chests are filled in generous quantities—contained poison, I recommended the sea as the best receptacle for the bulk of the medicine. A witch-doctor's *mana* continues after death. In one part of Mala, at any rate, the custom used to obtain of taking one big tooth from the skull of the deceased and adding it to the chain being formed of his predecessors' molars. I have in my possession a chain with seventy molars, each of which, I was told, is from a different skull, and each skull a leading witch-doctor's cranium. It was a very venerated

object once and of considerable antiquity. It probably lost *mana* as the tribe that held it gradually died out, but it was still a treasure, and was handed over to me with considerable emphasis on the value of the gift.

Another localized, specialized profession is that of money-making. There is an islet in the Langelanga lagoon of Mala whose population live by making red money. The men dive for and bring up the required red shell. It is broken up, and the women help in the long, slow process of grinding the fragments into tiny discs, about half the size of a threepenny-piece, smooth and round and polished. These discs are then bored. The apparatus used is ingenious; a framework of wood holds a sharp-pointed stick, this is twirled rapidly round by a string arrangement, and the shell gradually pierced. The discs are strung in various lengths up to two yards. Ten strings of two yards length are tied together, and this *taefilia* is used for large payments. A *taefilia* is worth about five pounds. Twenty years ago much of this "red money" was exported to New Guinea, but its popularity there waned, and I believe that very little goes now. The head of this "mint" was a coast chief, known on schooners and labour ships as "King Billy." He was a pidgin English-speaking native and a shrewd trader. The women have a monotonous life of toil grinding down the discs by incessant rubbing, then piercing and stringing them. Almost all the red money is made on this one islet; the work, being found profitable, has become a specialized profession.

Another profession, or rather rank, is that of chief.

The Solomons are mainly matriarchal, and, therefore, a man's rank is the rank of his mother. In practice this is often different, but the tradition remains. It was amusing to hear it said of a big chief, "He isn't really our chief, though he acts as such; his mother was a nobody." Normally, when a chief dies, a son, brother, or nephew succeeds. Cases of elections of chiefs are quite common. The *arais*, married men, are the electors. The chief represents the tribe. His personality tells, of course, but even the strongest chief has to act by consent of the tribe. Any money he accumulates is really tribal, and he distributes it freely as he acquires it to keep his position. The chief gives the word for any tribal action. He seldom forbids action desired by the tribe, but by silence or withdrawal from tribal life shows his displeasure; the tribe does not enjoy the weeks or months while the chief sulks; they too are obstinate, but apprehensive lest, after all, the tribal spirits should side with the chief and bring misfortune on them. This profession, too, is passing out of its old repute. Chiefs now are far too numerous, and their power is far less than it was.

The average native is independent of tribal life in proportion to his knowledge of and contact with white men. The chief, unless he has gone on plantation work as a boy, knows less of the new world around him. There is loss here. Every native is now more or less free to conduct his own quarrels, but this still involves his tribe in its turn. A few years ago the chief was really responsible for the actions of his men, now he is not. It is increasingly common for any individual possessed of a wife, and

possibly a married brother, or other relative, to separate himself from the tribe and start a new village. He is chief and his brother sub-chief. But the old dignity and power of the office is passing away. The Government try to preserve the rank and make it effective by appointing chiefs as village policemen, and making them responsible for order in the village. This does to some extent preserve the power of the profession, but the old tribal system is breaking up, it is to be feared, and cannot be restored from without. The chief selected for such honour does not as a rule welcome the burden of office.

One more profession must be mentioned—that of village teacher. In the old days there was no professional teacher. The nearest approach to schooling was the instruction given by the witch-doctor to his select pupils ; other education in living the native life depended on the older men's interest in the boys of the tribe. Now there is a body of teachers working under missionary supervision. There is, as yet, no Government system of education. The missionary teachers' work is recognized by the Government as useful. All regularly enrolled teachers are exempt from the poll tax levied in the Solomon Islands, where it can be collected on all males of ages between sixteen and sixty. The teacher holds school daily ; he teaches reading and writing and very elementary arithmetic, in addition to his religious teaching. He is expected to promote village welfare in practical ways outside of school by his example and influence ; to support, as far as possible, authority through the village chief, and

to lead the people, as far as he has learnt it, in industry and sanitation. A good teacher may be of great service in innumerable ways. He has a very difficult position to fill, and should be judged accordingly. An inferior or insincere man cannot be too soon got rid of. But it is not always easy to do so, especially in the case of those whose incompetence is due to ill-health or increasing years. Here is a profession that is bound to remain as long as the Solomon Islander survives. In years to come doubtless there will be Government-supported schools with certificated teachers. Till that day dawns the well-wisher of the native race will want to see the best use made of present material, and to help the new profession to a place of honour and respect.

CHAPTER FIVE

Birth Customs

IN the Solomon Islands the ceremonies relating to birth do not seem to be as numerous or elaborate as those obtaining among other primitive peoples. There are no doubt very many that remain unknown, necessitating prolonged and special inquiry. Still there are a good many that do become evident in the daily life of the people that cannot be kept secret. The attitude towards birth is a somewhat heartless one, with a strong element of terror or aversion in it. The older women are the controllers of the situation, and their influence and advice blocks the way to progress very effectively, though it has to give way finally to more rational and humane ideas.

There are certain foods which the expectant mother must not eat, there are certain charms which she must employ, but she goes on living the ordinary village life, and doing her usual daily work almost up to the time of the birth of her child. If the child is not wanted there are various ways known to the women of obtaining abortion, by concoctions from plants, or by external means. Death often is the result. In the more vigorous islands, such as Mala, these practices are condemned by the public conscience, and are exceptional. They seem to increase when infanticide is suppressed, and vigour is declining.

In the island of Mala there is a peculiar, very binding custom which forbids a birth in any village. The mother must go out, often alone, into the bush. She may eat no village food; her only visitors may, or may not, be one or two women paid by the husband, if he is so inclined, to bring her food, and look after her in some sort of fashion. But the food they bring must not come from her village, or belong to a supply cooked for others. No one comes near her except these one or two women, and their help is very casual, even when it is provided for. Often she is left entirely alone. She may put up some sort of rude shelter, and collect a little firewood, and scrape together something to eat from the bush, but often the child is born in the bush, the mother shelterless, without food or fire. I have come across a good many such cases. No one intervenes from among the heathen villages. They are afraid to do so; they shrink away from any sort of interference, lest it should bring trouble on them. Sometimes in despair or rage the mother will throw her infant away into the bush, and wander about for the forty days of her exclusion from her village, living as best as she can on what the bush affords. I recall one case where a message came to me, through a teacher's wife, that a woman was just about to throw away her child, as she was starving and cold and angry. No one dare take her village food, but I got some conveyed to her from my stock in time to save her and the child.

I remember another summons to help a woman in like case, on an islet off the main island. On reaching the place I found that the woman had gone. She

had, a very few hours after the birth of her child, swum with it to the main island about a mile away, across a very strong current, and was living in the bush there near a school village where she hoped to be able to get food, for the heathen taboos did not obtain there. In this case I was able to get to her husband and tell him what I thought of him for leaving his wife unprovided for. He seemed surprised to find himself to blame in the matter, and not inclined to acknowledge anything beyond a trivial casualness. But, as often happens, he began to see the point when it was driven home. Such cases are exceptional, but they are far from infrequent. Generally some sort of provision is made for mother and child. Naturally this system encourages infanticide, and is often a direct invitation to it, so the wonder is that it should be the exception, not the rule. There is no moral feeling against it, but only instinctive mother love and, where the people are virile, a desire for the increase of the tribe.

This system of "extra-village" birth leads, of course, to much loss of life, apart from deliberate destruction. I have come across several such cases. The mother dies alone in the bush, the child lives awhile, wailing itself to death by her side. No one, man or woman, dare touch either mother or child. A curse would fall on the whole tribe concerned if any one did. They must be thus untouched, unburied.

In one case of this kind I remember two of my people, bolder than the rest, volunteering to go and bury the woman, and bring back the child, if still living. So off they went, spades in hand, leaving a



THREE GENERATIONS.

Women of Feri-si-boa, one of the artificial islands off Mala main island. Any wearing of clothes before marriage is still unusual. But belts, bracelets and other ornaments are common.

rather startled, not to say scared, village behind them. The child died as they were digging the grave, and was buried beside the mother. On their return they met on the track a certain local chief's brother, a fighting man. Of course, he must find out why they were carrying spades. Next morning he came storming into their village to threaten war, or the payment of an impossible fine. The man's point of view was that he and his tribe were polluted by the meeting with the two men who had touched the woman and child, and would suffer calamity unless expiation were made. A life must be taken, or, as a concession to me, a fine would be accepted. I told the men to refuse to pay anything, and with great difficulty persuaded the man to "wait and see." He was really a good-hearted, though very excitable, warrior, and at last agreed to wait awhile. Happily during the next month or so his tribe had quite a good time—plenty of fish and no trouble from enemies.

Then on the far side of his village from mine there was an exactly similar case of a mother's death in the bush. The chief's brother hearing of it took the trouble to send word to the two men, inviting them to go past his village to bury the woman. He had begun to see that their deed of mercy was, after all, not harmful, and his naturally good feeling was able to act. This is the sort of way in which native customs get broken down, though not always, as in this case, for good. One defiance of even a very strongly rooted superstition shakes their faith in it, and there is room for their good sense to approve the better way. For example, I have

noticed a new custom when a man's hut is on the boundary, or an imaginary boundary, of the village, of building out a small room where the birth may take place. An imaginary *tapu* line of exclusion is drawn, and everyone is satisfied.

But suppose that such a terrible thing happens, as is sometimes the case, of a sudden birth within village bounds ; what happens then ? The tribe and village are polluted, under a terrible curse. Blood must be shed to take the curse off as soon as possible. The victim, I think, must be an adult man, for it is a very serious case. Every village near is on the watch lest they should be the place selected for a surprise attack. For many nights you will hear the drums throbbing far away in the bush, or, if near enough, the voices of men singing all night to show that they are on the watch. This gradually dies down, and they begin to resume their ordinary life, and go about in parties to their gardens by day ; then individuals will venture away from the main body, a shot will ring out from the bush, and the too adventurous worker will fall, or fly if unhurt.

Both parties rush back to their respective villages. The bolder returns first for the body, and carries it away for burial if it is his own tribe ; or perhaps the head is taken by the attacking party, if they happen to want a head. The curse is lifted, and in such cases peace is fairly easily made, for the village that suffers would do just as they had been done by in a like case, so no very vindictive feelings are stirred. There is rage for a time, but it soon calms down. In these cases visitors from distant places, or settlers of recent date, are in most danger, and are killed by preference.

Curiously, little personal resentment is shown. A man shot at and missed and the man who shot at him may be seen soon afterwards chewing together their betel nut, and talking over the intended victim's lucky escape. And even when a man is killed, his relations, after the first outburst of rage, feel no animosity towards the killer, but rather admiration at his boldness and success. After all, it was "up to" the village to take the curse off, and if brother Tom, or cousin Harry, were the victim that must have been because the spirits for some good reason failed to protect him. Anyhow, it all happened a month or two ago, and there have been several equally exciting events since, and the killer's company is rather honourable than otherwise, for he has made a name for himself as a bold and successful man.

The child is given at least one name at or soon after birth. He or she may receive several subsequently. There is one "big" name, when or how given I do not know; the others are temporary and topical. For example, there is a boy working here where I am writing whose birth I remember. His name has stuck to him in this case. It is *Omea-fuana*—"there is a fight on"—in memory of the time of stress during which he was born. Such a name may remain or be changed several times. Thus a notable warrior whose "big" name is *Keso*, is generally known as *Lainao*—"the man who gets there first." He has been remarkably swift on his feet from childhood, and was sure to be the first to arrive at the spot when anything exciting had happened. The second day I was in Mala I had

experience of this. I was out in my boat with a white companion, who shot at a duck as we passed a pool where they were feeding. It was not many minutes before, from two or three miles away, *Lainao*, club in hand, came rushing over the reef to know who had been killed and what the fight was about. He was a long way ahead of a band of followers who shortly afterwards appeared on the scene equally excited.

Attempts at English names as nicknames, not as "big" names, are in growing favour. Some of them are quaintly chosen. *Seilo*—that is "Sail oh!"—is rather an awkward choice, for when the owner is called for in the village people are apt to rush to the shore to look out for an approaching vessel. *Buloke*—"bullock"—is quaint. His father doubtless had had something to do with cattle in Queensland. *Ole-manu*—"old man"—shows acquaintance with the well-known designation of ships' captains. *Bule-mikau*—"bull and cow"—is the curious name given to tinned meat by "boys" from Queensland, and adopted as a personal name. *Kapitani*—"Captain"—does not seem to carry any honorific flavouring, but is just a name.

The "big" name is much more important. That is part of the owner's personality, and is not freely used except by proved friends. For example, for two or three years I think I only heard the aforementioned *Keso* called *Lainao*. When he began to be spoken of as *Keso* to me it was, though probably unconsciously, a mark of confidence. An enemy may make some evil use of the "big" name. That is why a native dislikes

telling you his name. To ask him, "What is your name?" is not quite good manners, though perhaps excusable in a white man. But it is quite proper to ask anyone standing by in his hearing, "What is his name?" He will be quite pleased to have it told by another.

As a rule the new-born baby is welcome when after forty days the mother returns to the village. During those forty days no man, not even the father, has seen mother or child. There does not seem to be any fixed ceremonial on the return of the child; it varies with the father's goodwill. A feast is made, sacrifices are offered, many charms are procured to put on arm or leg or head to preserve the child from various infant troubles.

The baby's rank is properly that of its mother, but in Mala, at any rate, there seems to have been always a strong admixture of patriarchal practice with matriarchal theory, and in actual fact the mother's brother, unless he is a self-assertive gentleman, does not play the prominent part that he does in other islands. I do not think that can be only recently the case. The growth of patriarchy seems to have begun before the white man's arrival in most parts of Mala. Perhaps the strictness of the marriage law, and the old frequent exaction of the death penalty for its violation, has had something to do with this. I do not think that infanticide was ever very common, though quite a legitimate practice. In practice, as far as I can gather, it rests mainly with the mother. A curious story in this connection was told me not long ago about an extinct tribe whose story I was asking about.

They had been a great fighting tribe, and lived in a state of turmoil. This grew so irksome that the matrons of the village planned together to destroy all male infants at birth. "Then," they said, "there will be no more left to carry on the fighting ; we shall have peace." The result was that the tribe became so weak and few that it broke up, and the few left found refuge in various villages. The tribe, as a tribe, disappeared, and left behind it an empty village and a large quantity of once sacred objects.

But as a rule the baby is welcomed into the tribe, and should the mother die before it is weaned very creditable efforts are made to find a foster-mother. Children that are not wanted by their own tribe can generally find a welcome by adoption into a neighbouring one. The boy is valued for the addition he may be hereafter to the tribe's manhood ; the girl, and this is even more important, for the betrothal and marriage money she may be worth.

I do not know of any formal acceptance of the child by the father or the tribe, but there is generally a feast made when the mother re-enters the village. This feast is the payment, in full or in part, of those who have fed and looked after the mother.

Twins are not popular ; they are something of a portent, and one or both generally used to be got rid of. Anything abnormal in the child at its birth is terrifying, and the child is killed.

The maternity work is of a very crude and rough kind, but the number of deaths in childbirth does

not seem very large, though heavier than it should be. The infant death-rate is heavy at birth, but heavier still during the first two or three years. The death of a baby is very lightly regarded ; though natural mother love finds fierce expression, the outburst is soon over. It is a distressing experience to be in a village on the night of an infant's death. From the mother's hut all night long come long howlings and shrieks, echoed by all who enter the hut, or are sitting with her. These cries and wailings are renewed again and again till daylight. The other villagers sit round chewing betel nut, smoking, spitting, yarning, without taking the slightest notice of what sounds like hopeless grief crying out for sympathy. Morning comes, a hasty, unceremonious burial, and the mother may be seen going about apparently quite cured of any heartache.

The baby must be a terrible burden to the mother, for it is never out of her arms. She carries it slung on her back, or astride her hip. It has a monkey-like aptitude for clinging tight, and can apparently sleep in any position. To add to her troubles are the customs of piercing the lobe of the ears, the cartilage of the nose, in some tribes the tip of the nose, and inserting ornaments of gradually increasing size. Worse still is the suffering caused by tattooing. The tattoo pattern and the amount of face, back, arms, legs, thighs, etc., covered varies in different islands, but the custom obtains everywhere. It causes intense pain and many sleepless nights ; the cuttings are liable to suppurate and cause terrible sores. But it must be done. No one would offer much of a price for an untattooed bride. Good

tattooing is certainly very picturesque and gives a very clothed effect to the body, but the price paid for it in suffering is too high. The Polynesian Islands are where the practice reaches the maximum extent of skin covered and of intricacy of pattern.

The marriage age in the Solomons is still often far too young, but it must have been earlier still in previous generations. In Mala I have very rarely come across glaring cases of premature marriage. It is, I think, commoner in other islands. Infant betrothal probably has a good deal to do with it. Here again Mala seems rather exceptional, for I found there that certainly most of the girls were unbetrothed till of marriageable age. Nor did this seem to be a new custom, though probably a comparatively recent one.

The birth-rate at one time must have been very high, for amongst the middle-aged it was very common to find, say, five or six surviving brothers or sisters out of a very large family. But now a family of five living children would be hard to find. In their primitive state they seem but very little removed from the animals as to the birth of their young. One sees this horribly clearly in some bush tribes where a mother may be seen suckling a piglet together with her child. And yet the very horror of seeing piglet and infant thus together shows how deep the gulf really is.

Then comes the next stage, when the primitive mother learns to wear clothes, to drop the worst of these customs, to tend, with some rudimentary knowledge, her child. A village in that stage tends to increase in numbers for a generation or so. Then

comes a distinct drop in the birth-rate in the third generation, and the race begins to dwindle and die. They were probably decreasing before ever the white man came. But the manifold hastening of the process is due to his advent.

CHAPTER SIX

Childhood

FORTY days from its birth the Mala child begins its village life. Not till then may even the most anxious father have a sight of his offspring. The mother goes through some simple purificatory rites, sacrifice is offered, and she brings the child to the hut, and is allowed to eat again the village food and resume her ordinary life.

Then follows a long period of infancy. The child is not weaned till about three years of age, or even more. I have not met with any definite period, or with any special rites of weaning. During the whole of that time it is being continuously carried about, slung at the mother's back, or carried astride her hip, and is very rarely laid down unless actually asleep. Even while at work in the garden the mother still carries the child.

The Melanesian, especially the father, is a fond parent. He is often an assiduous and willing nurse. He spends many a pleasant hour sitting in his village watching over his infant, carrying it about, humouring its every whim, while the mother, free for a few hours from her daily and nightly burden, goes about her work with her load a little lightened. When the husband is not so complaisant, the burden becomes sometimes intolerable. The child is carelessly, and even deliberately, neglected, exposed perhaps to the

sun, unwashed, and its sores untended ; it pines away and dies.

There is a growing shrinking among the women from the trouble of child-bearing and child-rearing. In the less " savage " islands the husband's anger is less feared, and parental destruction-of-life practices have increasing vogue, though condemned by the public conscience, Christian and heathen alike.

It is startling on entering a village to find how very few the children are in proportion to the population. Only in the artificial islets where the sea folk congregate, or in recently started school villages, are many children to be found. Of these a surprisingly large number are from the bush, adopted by the coast or school people.

The Solomon Island baby that is intended to live is for the first few months as fat and jolly an infant in its shining brown skin as one could wish to see. But all too soon come the almost inevitable yaws. Mouth, face, inside of knees and elbows, and then the body generally begin to be covered with these ugly sores. They are really dirt-caused, but are looked on as inevitable, and are sometimes deliberately sought for, " to get it over," as was the custom of ignorant parents at home in the case of measles. The victim dwindles and pines, and, if it survives, often becomes a permanent weakling. This disease is very quickly curable by modern science where there is a doctor available.

Then there is fever with all its sequelæ to contend with. The jolly child becomes a puny creature of skin and bone, with enlarged spleen and protuberant stomach, always wailing or yelling. The extra-

ordinary diet provided is another fruitful source of trouble. I have known of cases where chewed yam or taro, not the softest of root-foods, has been thrust into the infant's mouth even as early as the day of birth. It is supposed to be more strengthening than its natural food. However, children do survive, in spite of all that is against them, and grow up to healthy adolescence.

It is amazing to see the change wrought in the appearance of children taken from their villages, after three or four months of regular food and discipline in a school. They are hardly recognizable. Ninety per cent. probably had sores or other ailments; perhaps ten per cent. still need attention after the three or four months.

As soon as the child is able to walk about its education as a tribal member begins. It becomes more and more the child of the tribe, and less and less the child of its parents. This is the general law. There are plenty of exceptions due to natural affection. As a rule any tribal hut is equally "home" by day or night. The girl or the boy who is betrothed young becomes especially tribal, excepting in cases where the betrothal is a personal matter. Usually an earnest of the full sum promised, when a girl is being bought for a boy's future wife, is paid. This is a joint contribution, and pledges the tribe's credit for the full payment later, so the tribe becomes responsible for the child's future.

The boy attaches himself very young to his fathers, for all the men of his father's generation are *mama*, father. Soon he sleeps in the men's house, and by day follows them about as far as he is able.

Naturally his education is largely in his own hands. What he wants to do the bigger boys and the men will show him how to do. But not often will they give him any kind of training unasked. One of the earliest lessons to be learnt is to go to the fire and carry back a live stick to an elder to light his pipe with ; or still more often he is given the pipe to carry to the fire to light there. He gets to like puffing at the pipe in wondrous short time, and can smoke almost as soon as he can walk. Gradually other tasks proportionate to his strength are given him.

There is very little bullying, and much kindness, so his young years are happy ones. He learns respect for his elders, and thus good manners. But this education does not often embrace good manners to equals, or to women ; though a great number of natives are naturally pleasant and courteous, it is by nature, not by education, except as regards their elders. It is "not done" to take anything that may be placed above the chief's head, nor may you step across your elders' legs. Then there are many *tapus* to learn : what food you may not eat, what things and places you must avoid approaching, what to say if anyone sneezes, the proper formula for good-bye. There *is* one, though most departures, like arrivals, are singularly abrupt and unannounced. In Mala, so I was told by an old chief, who kept to the old custom himself, the correct thing is to say, when ready to go, *lealani*, literally "agoing," to which the host replies in surprise, *lealamu?*—"You're going?" Then comes the guest's final *lealaku*—"my going." But such formality is rare.

The boy's education is fuller and wider as a rule than the girl's, and his freer life develops his faculties better than her very narrow existence can possibly do. The girl follows the women to the gardens, learns to carry increasingly heavy loads, helps in any of the work on hand, but has very little freedom or variety. This is especially true of the girls in the bush ; the coast girls are much better off.

The boy follows bigger boys or men along the bush tracks at first on their short and peaceful errands. Men with small boys visiting a village, or on the bush tracks, show that the errand, whatever it be, is not a hostile one. He begins to learn woodcraft, to use his eyes and ears, to be ever on the watch. He finds out the various trees and their uses : this for canoe planks, that for its seats, this for firewood, that for house posts, this for arrows or bows, that for club or spear. He carries a small self-fashioned bow and arrow, and feels a great warrior as he threatens the life of small birds. He will soon begin to practise shooting, and, later on, spear-throwing. He listens to the men's unrestrained talk, and becomes partner of their feuds and superstitions. As he grows a little bigger he is called on to help in any work on hand, though an idle or sulky boy will escape it, for there is no regular discipline. He begins to learn bush-clearing, house-building, and so forth. He may, in a few cases, specialize as a witch-doctor's pupil, or apprentice of a kind to a canoe-builder, or a master of some native art or craft. If a coast child, he learns fishing with line or net or kite, and the handling of a canoe. He can be useful as a canoe hand at a very early age. The bush boy learns the

notes and ways of birds, where to find edible food self-grown, how to take cover, how to move silently. The coast boy learns of the fish and their ways, where are the best pools, of the turtle, of the shark and how little he need fear him, of the crocodile and the danger of careless approach to his haunts, and at last of the hunting of the porpoise. He is taught which fish are edible and which are poisonous, and he learns endless superstitions about every object he sees, living or inanimate.

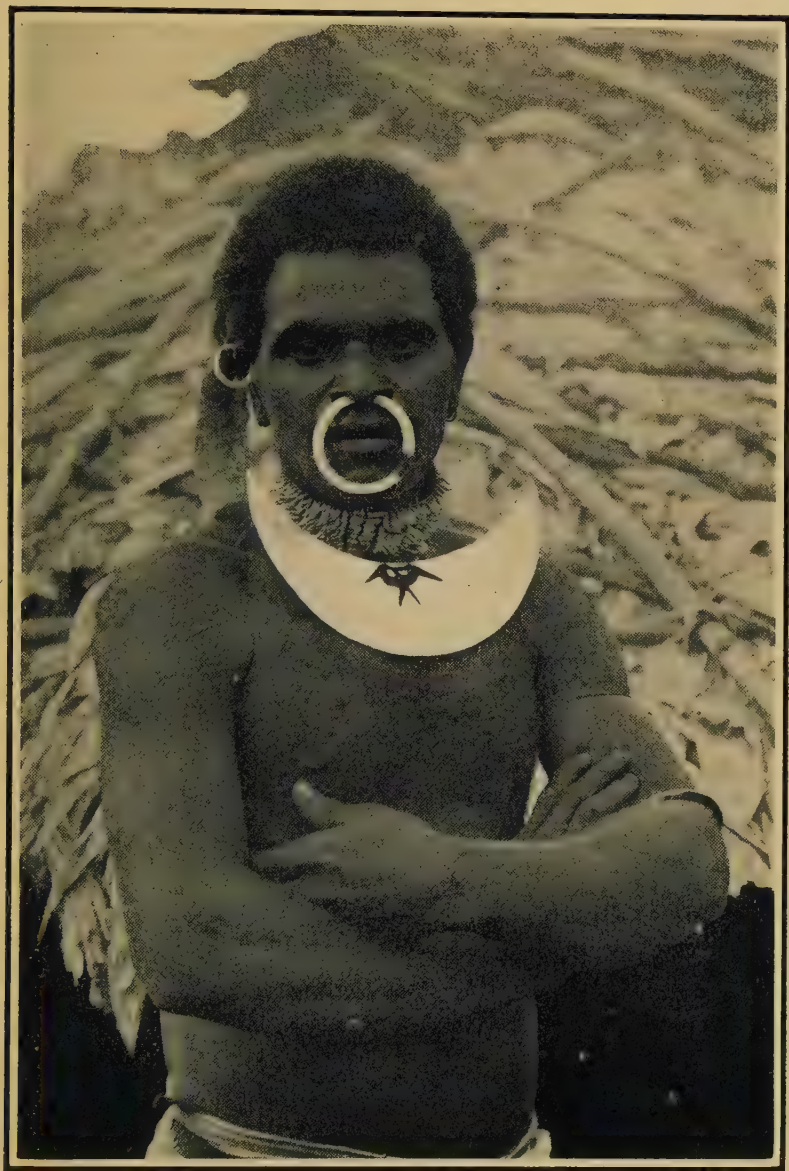
Both bush and coast boy, if of lively disposition, look eagerly forward to the day when they will be allowed to accompany a fighting party. The less adventurous are content with feasting or dancing expeditions.

About the age of puberty the boy's fuller education begins. He is separated for a time from his village, and lives secluded with other boys in a hut for about a month. He lives in darkness and dirt with but poor food. Various ceremonies, many of them nauseous ones, are performed, sacrifices and prayers are offered. The teeth are blackened, and in some islands sharpened, and he emerges a young man. He begins to assert himself, to put on ornaments on the slightest pretext, to strut about the village, to roam off to other villages to display himself, to crave eagerly for any excitement that he can share in. He is at a dangerous age ; the elders shake their heads over his wilful, quarrel-provoking ways, but do little else to restrain him.

But soon, if not already betrothed, a marriage will be arranged for him. He will oppose it for a time ; perhaps run away with a self-chosen bride, and come

back to "face the music," knowing that probably his people will eventually pay for his wife. But more often he accepts the wife chosen, with whom his life may be, after all, as it often is, a fairly peaceful one, and so he passes into manhood. A few years pass, and in the majority of cases he has "ranged himself" and settled down as a decent member of his tribe. But there is always a percentage of unsettled ones, who are for ever giving trouble and bringing their tribe into hot water by their misdeeds.

When the chief is a strong man the young men submit well to tribal law, and dare not "act flash," to use the pidgin English phrase, on their own private account. But where the chief is weak the youths take control. For some boyish quarrel he will strut about with a borrowed gun, red flower over the right temple, all his ornaments on, provoking to, and challenging to, a fight which will involve the whole tribe. But the well-taught boy will wait and only move with the tribe when the word is given, and all proper ritual and formalities known to the old men have been gone through. Ornaments, for example, should not be put on indiscriminately. That head-circlet of shells with which the youth longs to adorn himself is not a mere ornament. Some, at any rate, of those shells have mystic *mana*, to give courage perhaps, or to render invisible, or to secure a straight shot. Words of enchantment must be said, and sacrifices offered that power, thanks to propitiated spirits, may work. So the youth must restrain his impetuosity, and wait till some great occasion calls for the adorning he longs for. Even with the flowers he may not do as he



MAN OF QAREA. NORTH WEST Mالا.

The crescent shaped shell breast-plate, with tortoise shell adornment showing the frigate bird is valuable. His necklace of porpoise teeth, 1,000 of them, is worth about £5. A heavy shell armlet and nose ring complete his holiday dress.

chooses. A red flower, for example, stuck in the stiff hair over the right temple means "I am in a state of war," either provoking or preparing an attack. Another arrangement of flowers denotes courtship : "I am seeking a wife" ; another tells the onlooker, "I am mourning." Then there are rules to be learnt as to blackening the face, or covering the body with ashes when in mourning, and seeking revenge. A lock of a dead man's hair tied to the hair over the left temple I have seen worn for years as a sign of mourning, and a pledge that revenge for the death is still being sought.

A few years ago for the growing lads there was a moonlight school. Some elder would call the bigger boys from their play, and give them regular teaching in spear-throwing, bow and arrow exercise, how to use adroitly the shield, how to dodge spear or arrow, and other teaching tending to make warriors. But the influx of guns of all sorts made the school obsolete, and latterly I never saw it, or even heard of it.

This free native education had many good points. The boy native-trained was in some respects better off than the semi-civilized native of to-day. He was a better man in the bush and the garden ; he learnt very effectively self-reliance. He learnt to do everything for himself ; to make things, not to earn wages to buy things ; he had to be active and wary as he moved about, for his life depended on it. He learnt to obey tribal law and respect for his elders. But in spite of these advantages his case was a hopeless one. The door of progress was bolted and barred. He never could improve on his ancestors,

and he was weighed down by a dense mass of degrading superstitions. Now he is probably not so fine an animal as he was, but he has prospects, if rightly treated, of learning life on a higher plane, and of possibilities of progress.

But his present education physically is not satisfactory. Just when he ought to be learning quickness of eye and skilful use of his hands in fishing, hunting, gardening, house-building, he goes off at sixteen, or younger if for house-work, to a coconut plantation. The work cannot interest him, and its regular hours are not inspiring. The money earned is the one object of interest, and most of it is spent very unprofitably. He returns to his village with acquired tastes and lessened adaptability to the native life. He has an easier time in many ways than those before him, but much less excitement. The boys now are valued by the tribe, not as cultivators, or fishermen, or as skilled in building or weapon-making, or as fighters, but simply as money-earners who take their turn on the plantation. Money is paid when they recruit, and they bring back money with them, which the tribe, though in lessening degree, share.

But to return to the children of the village. There are perhaps few prettier sights in the world than a moonlit native village alive with children at play. The bright light of the moon falls on the open space ; all that is ugly or dirty is veiled. The air is cool and mild ; the evening meal has been eaten, and the elders are good-humoured and placid. So have I seen it at rare intervals after a spell of peace has given time for the people to get a " quiet inside " and

be happy. The games are haphazard, most of the play is just romping about, but there are some regular games that they engage in. There is a sort of Fox and Goose game, and another akin to "Ring a ring of roses"; sham fights are popular; dodging toy arrows and spears gives great amusement to players and onlookers. There are dance steps to be practised; various competitions, unhampered by rules, of lifting or jumping are popular. Quieter children will be making cats' cradles; of these there are a great number known, some of great intricacy. There are games akin to "knuckle bone," played with shells or stones. Miniature huts are often built, and make a sort of dolls' houses on a grand scale. Their movements are very light and graceful. Their laughter has a delightful timbre, and they are generally thoroughly good-tempered in their play. To quarrel, even at play, is a serious matter and may lead to grave trouble. So a quarrel is rare. It all makes the onlooker wonder for a time whether the happiest of all mundane states is not the state of a "savage" child at play.

But all too often the other side of the shield swings suddenly into sight. A shot rings out in the bush hard by—then dead silence—a cry, "Who has been killed?" Before you can look round women and children are cowering silent in their huts; the men have seized their weapons, and rushed away to find out what has happened. Is anyone missing from the village? Then probably he or she has been the victim. A child's body may be found only a few yards away; ten armed men are already far away back on their track to their village to boast of their

exploit. They will be received with shrill, piercing cries of joy and horrid glee by the children playing perhaps in that neighbouring village. The drums will bang out from five or six villages near, each with an alarm of its own to agitate it ; and perhaps many moons will become full before one looks down on children at play in that district. So an abiding lesson of cunning and revenge is taught to people naturally simple and kindly.

On any day may come a demand to a village for a child to be given up to be killed, to "make square," and so end a quarrel. The "big" sea chief *Qaisulea* used to carry on a regular traffic in this business as intermediary between the two tribes concerned. He thought nothing of the sacrifice of the child's life—it would probably be a lame or weakly boy of little value—but much of his skill as peacemaker, and, most of all, of the money he got from both sides when peace was made. He would send a canoe to the landing nearest the village where the life was wanted. The child, tied up hands and feet, would be brought down and thrown in the bottom of the canoe. From *Qaisulea's* village he would be dispatched to his destination to meet his fate. Rarely some one would redeem him, and make the child, by a payment, his adopted son or tribal slave.

But generally, in various ways, the killing was done. I know of one case where the child was used as a target to be shot at and speared to death by the boys of the village to which he had been surrendered. In another case where the chief was very full of vengeance, the victim was thrown on the ground and

trampled to death, again by the boys of the village. But generally, as is characteristic of Melanesians, the killing was done quickly and mercifully. The child would be ordered to climb up a coconut tree and cut down from behind with one blow ; or bidden suddenly look round and then instantaneously shot or killed with club or axe. Then there was peace for a time. The villages made a display of various native treasures equal in amount and value, and then exchanged them, after *Qaisulea* had deducted his percentage.

I suppose that it is among the children that one can best test the intelligence of the Solomon Islander. I have been told by experienced teachers that where, as in Queensland, Melanesians and white children have been schooled together, the brown child more than holds his own up to about the fourth standard. After that, as is inevitable, the white child begins to lead. The percentage of quick and intelligent children is quite a good one. Their brain power is, I believe, quite good as to quality. They have not had long ages of development behind them, but the brain power of average human quality is there. If they have their chance, they will show this as generations begin to hand stored knowledge on to their successors.

One class of children in the Solomons is now almost extinct. I refer to the children born in Queensland, sent back with their parents in 1904 to their islands. The bulk of these came to Mala. Theirs was not a happy lot. The older ones had lived almost a white child's life as to food and clothing in Queensland ; many had been to school, and quite a number knew

very little of their own language. The best of them were brought by their parents or guardians to various island schools. There they had shelter and a measure of protection. But few lived very long. Fever weakened them, and they died very easily. They never were really "at home." They were inferior to the native-born children in all that made native life happy, superior in that which they were better without. A few were old enough to adapt themselves to their strange surroundings, and "made good," generally in some capacity of service to the white man. Many of these children were taken straight away to the bush villages by their parents, perhaps to cannibal surroundings, and there promptly relapsed into savagery. The day of their arrival very likely would see the foolishly overclothed child who landed from the schooner running about naked. In a very few weeks he or she would be as those around them, only feebler. They, too, soon died off.

Another distinct class of child is the adopted child. He or she is found most often in coast villages. They have been bought from the bush. Some villages have very few children other than those thus bought. The price is small, the trouble of rearing them has been escaped, and their status is the useful one of semi-slave. They are quite kindly treated, and live with their adopters as their own children, but they are expected to work and obey in a way that the free child does not think of doing. They become one of the tribe, and after marriage take their full place in it. The marriage price of an adopted girl is not as heavy as that exacted for a home-born child.

The problem of the child in the Solomons is becoming very acute. What is needed is something that will make him happy in his own village. Very little has been possible yet on industrial lines, but that is what is needed. With a few simple tools and a course of training he could find lots of interesting work to do, leading him on to tackle more difficult jobs. All native work should be warmly encouraged, and the teaching of other work as far as possible should grow from his own old work. What he needs is a "gospel" of home-made work, learning to use his hands in his own village. What he gets from the white man is employment as "labour," for which he earns wages soon spent in buying useless, unnecessary, or even harmful things at high prices, or things useful perhaps, but which he had much better make for himself.

C H A P T E R S E V E N

Betrothal and Marriage

THE age of betrothal in the Solomons varies much in different islands. In some of them infant or child betrothal is the ordinary custom ; in others, notably in Mala, it is rather exceptional, though quite legitimate. Probably everywhere there is a tendency to make the betrothal age later than it used to be. A good deal depends on whether islands are in actual practice patriarchal or matriarchal. Where betrothal is deferred till marriageable age the value of the girl is assessed not only by her tribal value, but by her personal qualities of strength and willingness.

Theoretically the parties mainly concerned in the arranging of a marriage are the maternal uncles of the respective parties. Practically the parents, especially the bridegroom's father, subject to tribal influence, have the main voice. In every marriage contract is to be seen the struggle for control between the tribe and the individual. The main tribal concern is monetary. A preliminary payment is made to bind the bargain, and is a very real obligation, one very difficult to evade or get rid of. Arrangements, of course, are altered sometimes in the interval between betrothal and marriage, but not often, except by death or a *coup de main*.



SOGA, A BIG CHIEF OF BUGOTU AND HIS WIFE.

Once a famous fighter, his word was law to the Island he ruled well.
The many shell ornaments, breast ring and beaded belts are typical.

In the case of death the earnest money paid ought to be handed back, or another girl accepted from the same tribe. The tribe or family raise the money between them. Further, it is so arranged that in the next generation the money is to return to the tribe that paid it. Tribe A has paid tribe B, say, £30 for a bride ; next generation tribe B must pay tribe A £30 for a bride. Accounts of unfailing accuracy are kept in the heads of the tribes concerned. Refusal to buy a wife is also remembered, and reacts on the next generation. I have quite recently heard of a case where a most appropriate marriage had been arranged with mutual goodwill. But the arrangement was held up by a very few distantly related members of the tribe who recalled a refusal of a proposed marriage between the two tribes a generation ago. The matter was with great difficulty settled in favour of the bride, bridegroom, and the vast majority of the relations.

Payment is made in pigs, shell money, porpoise teeth, and tobacco, and gifts of ornaments of all kinds. For a girl of position some £30 is paid, for a chief's sister or daughter perhaps £50 ; and the price goes downwards according to rank and age till it reaches its nadir in the case of a middle-aged widow, whose relations are glad to accept 100 porpoise teeth, value 10s., for her.

Normally the youths of the village take their turn to have a wife bought for them, and the bride should be obtained from the tribe whose turn it is to provide one. A younger brother may thus have to wait for a very long time. In the old days the tribe must

have had considerable hold over its young men by this system. There may have been cases of individuals, other than chiefs, buying wives, but they would be exceptional, for before the day of white men and wages the youths would have very little chance of handling any money of their own.

The customs as to prohibited relationships are very strict and complicated, and are very rarely broken. All marriages are exogamic, and cousins, who can marry in England, are within the prohibited degree in the Solomons. The children belong to the mother's tribe.

So little is marriage a personal question that the boy or girl concerned does not even trouble always to be personally acquainted with his or her betrothed, even when they have every opportunity. Perhaps it is a question of etiquette. I once asked an intelligent and by no means meek or unself-assertive boy where a large party of his relatives had gone in their canoe. "To buy me a wife," he said. I politely hoped that she was a nice girl, and that he approved the choice, for he knew every one in the village concerned. "Oh," he said, "I don't know which of the girls it is that they will buy." "Why didn't you go with them?" I asked, to see what he would say. "Oh, I thought that it didn't matter; they will settle it all right." His turn had come to be married, and, as a decent citizen, he was ready to make the best of it.

But, of course, over and over again the personal element will come in. A boy and girl will, in spite of tribalism, fall in love, or take a dislike to the

selected parties if known to each other. Each in that case will begin by passively resisting their approaching fate, deferring the date as often as they can manage it in the hope of something being sure to turn up. A pair in love have one remedy—that of running away together. They disappear one night into the bush, and hide there till the storm that breaks out has spent its force. When the worst of the excitement and the threatenings are over they return to face the music. Generally the matter is patched up by a series of intricate payments and repayments, and promises of future marriages to adjust the confusion caused, and the pair become according to native custom a recognized married couple.

But not infrequently the trouble is never got over, the financial readjustments hang fire, and the affair drags on indefinitely. They are tolerated in the village, but are looked at askance as being undischarged debtors and more or less likely to cause trouble at any time. And then again, if Romeo has an elder brother unmarried he is not playing the game in securing his Juliet before his turn. For the settling of his affair will delay his brother's chance of marriage. I don't think that, as a rule, much blame attaches to Juliet. "He bade me run off with him" is an excuse that appeals to the village elders. For in theory the man only has the ruling say in the matter, though in actual practice it is far otherwise. It is probable that these run-away marriages are getting much less rare than of old, for there is not, in most islands to-day, much personal risk to be run, though there may be abuse and unpopularity to be

faced. Plantation life, too, has put it within the power of a young fellow to earn enough to pay for his wife himself. So he naturally prefers to choose for himself.

However, we will suppose that all goes according to programme. When all, or a sufficient part, of the agreed on sum has been got together, the day comes for the bringing home of the bride. If the son of a chief is marrying a chief's daughter, this is quite an occasion of ceremony. If a coast village is concerned the chief sets out in his best canoe, with as large an escort attending as he can muster. The bridegroom will not be there probably, but his mother will be present and all his other relations. All the men will be in gala attire, with flowers and ornaments of all sorts, but not in war dress. The canoe will be adorned, and nowadays red calico will float from a bamboo mast. Songs will beguile the journey as the canoes sweep on with the rhythmic stroke of many paddles, broken by, at intervals, the sharp tap-tap of the steersman's paddle on the edge of the canoe as he signals to change the time and length of stroke. So they arrive at the village where the bride is waiting. Then follows in some villages in Mala what must be a recollection of earlier times—the days when the only way to get a wife was to capture her. The young men land from the canoe, and are met in mock fight by the young men of the village. It is sometimes very rough play, as they get excited over it. Tempers are not always kept, and the elders' minds are relieved when it is safely over without a tragedy. They do not mind very much being banged about, bruised, or

knocked down, but if weapons are produced, or any blood flows, even accidentally, they are very apt to see red.

At last the visitors are allowed to push their way through ; and next day perhaps, or at once, the bride and her people in their canoes accompany the visitors back to their village. A very jovial procession is formed for the occasion. There is feasting and dancing for a few days, and then the bride's party return, leaving the bride in her mother-in-law's hut. There she will remain for a few weeks, or even months, to learn the ways and duties of her new home.

At last the marriage day, which is the day of payment, comes. The bride's party arrive to fetch the money. The men, armed, group themselves together in the open space, usually with the bride's mother's eldest brother as their chief man. Then, one by one, with leaping, dancing, shouting, spear-shaking, in fullest array, comes forward each contributor to the sum, bringing his gift. He proclaims aloud its great and inestimable value as he prances forward, then deposits it at the receiver's feet, and hastily retires. I suppose modesty forbids his lingering to see how his valuation of his gift agrees with the recipient's. The gifts thus brought are piled together till the sum is accounted complete, or a promise of real completion accepted. The dowry will be in the form of strings of shell money, porpoise teeth, and tobacco. A substantial part in the shape of grown pigs will not be *en evidence*, but young piglets may be personally presented. As it is difficult to wave a young piglet in the air, or whirl

it round the head, it is solemnly presented folded in the donor's arms, while he tells of its future prospects of plumpness and greatness. The donor continues to take a tender interest in the pig's history till it is ready for killing, perhaps looks after it himself till that day comes, and then shares in the feast. All the villages round have gathered to see the money paid, and its value is known far and wide. The bride is somewhere, standing timidly unnoticed in the background, the bridegroom as far away from her as he can get, trying to look as if he had dropped in casually to see what was going on.

Then, the money paid and left awhile to be publicly admired, the company, in separate groups, fall to in a feast of pig and pudding. The pudding is generally a mash of taro and nuts spread out on banana leaves. I paced one such pudding once over one hundred yards in length. Perhaps there were over one thousand people at that particular feast, so every one would get a good solid block of pudding of roughly about 4 by 6 by 2 inches, with a good helping of very greasy fat pork. A white visitor's share would be double or treble—a very pleasing custom to the white man's cook boy.

The feast is accompanied by a dance, and the whole of the following or preceding night by a sing-song. Then the exhausted singers and the bride's party have a good long sleep before they return home. Meantime the bride has been taken to her husband's hut—a new one—to become his property, to work his garden, and make him a home. For it is work that is expected of her. Her reputation for

strength and good temper is quite a factor when the marriage bargain is made. The young man proclaims his desire to marry by strutting about his own and neighbouring villages in all available begged and borrowed ornaments. The girl shows her willingness by being seen staggering cheerfully under the heaviest possible loads, and so getting a reputation as a good, strong worker. There is a dangerous competition for prominence in this respect if several girls in one village are on the look-out for husbands. I know of one village where quite a number of the girls permanently ruined their health by carrying excessively heavy weights of food-stuffs. Most of them did marry eventually, but their money value had fallen considerably.

The number and position of the bride's men folk is another important factor. If she is one of a large family her husband gains valuable allies. It is also a great protection to her, for if her husband treats her badly her men folk will have much to say about it. Personal attraction and good looks seem to count for comparatively little in money value ; personal affection, however welcome, seems to come last of all. It is not expected, and hardly even hoped for, by the primitive native.

After the marriage comes the settling down. On the whole this crude system does not work out so very badly in practice. Generally the marriage pair do settle down to a fairly amiable association, and the native love of children is a very real tie. They do not expect much of mutual companionship in married life, and are satisfied to get along fairly well together. But naturally there are a great number of exceptions

to this rule. Then the quarrels, nagging, and jealousies are incessant. They are only kept under at all because an open blaze up means an inter-tribal row. Sometimes a jealous or angry woman will deliberately provoke this. There is a recognized procedure. An offended woman comes out of her hut, and stands staring about till attention is attracted. Then she begins to pace up and down, more and more rapidly ; a low muttering is heard, then, if this is not stopped by those who do not want trouble, a series of shrieks, till she finally loses all control over herself and becomes wildly hysterical. Then the matter becomes a serious one, and there is what they call "big trouble."

The marriage bond is respected, a respect due to fear, not to any ethical code. Unfaithfulness very often used to mean the death of both parties. The deserted husband was furious at being robbed of his most valuable property ; the tribe was outraged at having spent their money in vain. The deserted wife's case was taken up with equal vigour by her people. It was much more a money than a moral question. For when the guilty parties escaped safely from the first attempts at vengeance they could generally by payment save their lives, and be eventually recognized as safe from vengeance, though always more or less in disgrace. The death penalty certainly was a wholesome sanction, for the islands where it was most stringently enforced were the most moral. The buying of wives, too, "like pigs," as some indignantly add, is a good custom. Without it there would be a horrible state of laxity and confusion, and the slow

growth of a higher standard would be well-nigh impossible.

Much married life is spoiled by the proneness of the primitive mind to suspicion and jealousy. They are very, very quick to suspect. Every suspicion they think is well founded ; to think anything true is to assume as a fact that it is so. Over and over again a native will tell you his suspicions and guesses in the form of facts that he knows to be true. He honestly tells you the tale as he imagines it to be, and is genuinely puzzled at being questioned or doubted. Tittle-tattle of the most trivial character is a great plague in village life, and curiosity and guess-work soon make up a tasty dish for jealousy to feed on. Then, again, deliberate false accusation is terribly common. It is a weapon of attack, defence, or revenge. Happily, by its very commonness, it often defeats its own ends, and the invented slander, often a clumsy one, falls flat. Sometimes a man or a woman will deliberately accuse themselves of a crime, or of ill-behaviour, to implicate some innocent party in the alleged fault.

The husband, of course, is expected to be masterful. He may thrash his wife within limits, and good often results. The weak husband is subject to incessant nagging. Sometimes, when this becomes really unendurable, he will arise with an axe or knife and smash his—no, not his wife's head—but his own hut or furniture. This form of protest, being a nuisance to neighbours in the middle of the night, is occasionally effective for a short time.

The really brutal husband is happily a rare exception. Against him the wife has one effective weapon.

She threatens suicide, and eventually, if he does not reform, will carry out her threat. That is a terrible revenge. Her spirit is set free to torment the man, and the mere terror of that is bad enough. He is a sort of social leper, as well as a terrified and scared widower. Fear causes sickness. He collapses at once, and will very often die of sheer fright. I remember one curious case. A meek and quiet husband, chief of a small village, was being continually nagged by an ill-tempered wife. He endured it very passively. At last he turned the tables on her by deliberately eating of some poisonous fish that he had caught. I wondered if he was satisfied by the sensation and trouble that his suicide caused? There was a sort of gloomy horror over the whole village; they were stunned by the catastrophe, and a sulky and frightened existence became for a time their lot. The widow was distinctly unpopular, but as usual they looked outside the tribe to lay the blame elsewhere. It was many months before the village settled down at all, after many vain attempts at revenge through various allies. They were too weak to strike themselves. The place never recovered, but lost prestige and energy, and lived on only as a poor, weak village.

Marital happiness is further complicated by polygamy. Most chiefs have two or more wives, but not many of the people. In earlier days probably all the older men were polygamists, but now it is exceptional. Only a very few men in any one village are likely to have more than one wife, though it is quite lawful to do so. Polygamy, of course, does not make for domestic peace, especially when the

second wife is younger and usurps the power that the first one had. One old chief preserved domestic peace by placing each of his five wives in a different village, in his hut there. He travelled about a good deal, and by this means always had a home to go to. A very usual case of polygamy is when a man marries two sisters. This is due to the fact that the wife generally has a younger sister or other relation living in her hut to help her in the garden and with her family. The assistant may, or may not, be a second wife.

In the case of a widow or a widower custom approves of remarriage, but it should be with one in the same state. This is economical. A widow costs very little, and the problem for the widower of getting together the necessary monies is made easy of solution.

In one island some years ago the price of wives became almost prohibitive. A general meeting of the whole island was held, at which it was solemnly resolved to reduce the price to a reasonable sum. The men were agreed, so of course the rule was made. But the women were most indignant at being thus reduced in value. As one would expect, very little practical change took place; the old prices still obtained, except in a few cases.

In the island of Gela the prospective wife used to be tattooed on the face while still a very small child. The work is artistic if well done, and, in native eyes, very attractive. It signifies a certain social status, and hence the tenacity with which the custom was clung to; it enhanced the girl's money value. The tattooing was extremely painful, keeping the child

in agony for a long period ; the cuttings often used to suppurate, and ugly sores were caused ; but no one would pay more than a trifle for the untattooed girl. So the custom lingered long after its folly and uselessness were recognized, till in 1906 it was forbidden by a Government ruling. It needs a strong-willed parent to refuse to fulfil a social obligation which is also financially profitable.

So boy and girl marry, and do settle down very often into a moderately harmonious life together. Marriage to both is a very marked step upwards. The young man is now an *arai*, a term of respect. He no longer wanders about seeking mischief ; he can no longer be sent without being consulted on errands by the chief or tribe. He no longer works in the chief's garden, or builds his house at the word of command, but he has his bit of land on the tribal territory. He has his own house, too, and is no longer confined to the bachelors' quarters. Thus, in the majority of cases, the once restless bachelor settles down and becomes a quiet, respectable villager, whose chief distinction is that you hear or see very little of him. His main object seems to be to keep out of trouble as far as possible by never doing anything individual, or opposing anything tribal.

So he passes on into a sober, subdued sort of middle age, and a peaceful old age. He is thought a good, inoffensive man, and when decrepit will be kindly treated, sure of food and shelter. He generally dies peacefully, having had enough of what primitive life and culture have to offer. He has not left trouble behind him, so is buried in peace, with

but little excitement over, or resentment at, his death. His wife, if she survives him, shows her grief by never again eating certain foods, or never washing the face that she has blackened to show that she is in mourning.

C H A P T E R E I G H T

Death

TO the native mind death is an unnatural thing, and therefore very terrifying. In their old age a man or woman of a tribe may die, and there is but little comment or excitement. The death of an infant is exciting or not worth comment in proportion to the parents' affection and position. But the theory still holds about every death that some one has caused it. The death is the deed of a hostile spirit. But some one has caused the spirit to act. The survivors must find out who this is, if they care at all about the death. The death must, for the tribe's reputation and security, be made square by another death—roughly speaking, one of equivalent value. The cause of most deaths, in native eyes, is witchcraft, for they fear witchcraft more than anything, and readily suspect it. Anyone may have been the person who did the work of invoking death. The spirit of the dead is impatiently waiting to be avenged. Or it may be that the dead have provoked their own death by neglecting or defying their own spirits.

An accident will be sometimes a preliminary warning to attend to forgotten sacrifices, or to be more busy about settling a feud ; if this is neglected death will be the next thing. But unless a man is very conscious of neglect of duty to the spirits, or of

having defied *tapus*, he will always look round for the causes of his own accident or bad luck or his relation's death. When sickness takes a serious turn two main thoughts becloud the patient's mind. He wants first to know who is bewitching him, and he wants to be taken elsewhere out of the range of the angry spirit. It is all very vague, but he has a distinct hope that in another village the angry spirit will have no power over him, for the spirits of their ancestors can only work locally and tribally. If he dies in the place to which he has fled, then evidently some outside hostile spirit is the active agent. This view of death, of course, makes for much confusion and excitement; it breeds fear and moroseness. Sanitary precautions, keeping out of the way of infection, regular watching over the sick are almost completely neglected. There are various, and some of them useful, remedies concocted from plants or trees, leaves or bark, which they try.

But the power to heal lies much more in the incantation than the medicine, and therefore a medicine which does not act at once is of no value. To relieve pain massage and hot stones are useful, but are very spasmodically and fitfully employed. Their affections are keen, and their hearts are humane, but fatalism and ignorance paralyse any regular or persistent treatment. Nothing can be of much use if a spirit is still malevolent, on his own account, or because won over by an enemy to attack the victim. Nor does the failure of charms to work a cure shake their faith in their potency. The charms are not to blame. They would have acted had not

some stronger spiritual power prevented them. Sometimes, indeed, a man will turn in anger on his sacred objects, or images, or pieces of *mana*-stuff, and fling them defiantly away. I have often known a father to do this after a child's death. His feeling is, I think, that it is futile to be subservient to, or to fear, a spiritual power too feeble to save his child, so easily conquered by power from outside.

Death then is feared as the greatest of all catastrophes, the last and worst of accidents. This feeling is intense in the case of sudden death, or of death in youth or the prime of life. It is a gloomy, mysterious, frightening event; it means going out into a dim underworld of fading spirits. There seems no idea of a happy spirit existence; spirits are never at rest; they are always wanting appeasement, or demanding bribes to help.

And yet side by side with this horror of death is a strange indifference about the taking of life. The mother flings away her child, and thinks no more about it; a man who has killed is an object of respect rather than of horror. They would not, as a rule, strike a child cruelly, but to give him up to be killed carries no moral stigma. In a pestilence or epidemic they are singularly free from sympathy or grief. Death in such cases seems to paralyse their natural feelings.

The death of a chief is an event to be dreaded. It causes great trouble if he is a "big" chief. The clamour and destruction are in proportion to his importance. In Mala the first thing to be done after a chief's death is to smash up his and the

tribes' gardens. Huts are demolished, gardens torn up, coconut trees cut down, and an orgy of destruction is indulged in. This is done by visitors who have rushed to the village on hearing of the death, who show thus their sense of the great loss their friends have suffered ; or it is done by the tribe itself to prove their sorrow. But if neither of these do it, an enemy force will turn up and set to at the job. A chief's death is too great an opportunity to be missed for humbling the power of his tribe. So, as a rule, the tribe itself prefers to do the destroying. They may get off more lightly. And if they destroy extensively that will redound to their glory and show how great a chief they have lost. So the successor, if a big chief, rarely succeeds to his predecessor's possessions or position in full, but some other tribe has its turn at being the leader of the group concerned.

Wealth is the measure of a chief's power. After a death the successor has to distribute the bulk of the tribal property to secure his position. The successor nowadays, at any rate, is generally a son, probably the eldest, or a brother. He begins by announcing a series of death feasts in honour of the dead. " I will kill one hundred pigs for my father " was the announcement of one son that I remember. That was a very big promise, and between two or three years later was still being completed. The first feast is the funeral one, and is not on a very large scale ; then at intervals of a hundred days, or thereabouts, will follow ten to thirty pig feasts. The last feast is the biggest of all. About forty days before the feast the drum taps out the number of

days to be counted. There is a long roll on the big drum, which carries news for many miles, then 40, 39, 38 . . . 1 strokes are sharply tapped out. During the last week a crowd proportionate to the number of pigs to be killed has been gathering. This last feast over, the spirit of the dead man can rest, and his successor is established in office.

Every man, in accordance with his position or affection or ambition, makes a death feast. Even for a small child at least a pudding feast will be made. But the ordinary man will do well to act prudently. If he makes too big a feast jealous minds will suspect him of aiming at greatness, and will work out plans that may cause his downfall. But he must make a feast of some sort, or the restless spirit of the dead will cause him trouble.

The methods of burial are various, some of them gruesome. Immediately after death the body is closely rolled up in mats, tied round tightly over the the breast, the waist, and feet. The face is sometimes left exposed. All concerned crowd the hut. Wife, sister, or other female relations keep up a loud, monotonous wailing, while floods of tears, which seem to be available at any moment, roll down their cheeks. Occasionally they tear and cut their faces or bodies, but more often are content to blacken them. At each fresh arrival the wailing bursts out more shrilly, and the tears roll down faster. In some cases hired mourners are engaged to demonstrate grief, and it would be hard to tell by appearance whether the mourning was genuine or paid for. But soon the expression of the face will tell the

spectator. The real mourner retains a fixed, gloomy, sullen, scared look which the hired man cannot do more than imitate fitfully.

The funeral day should be the same as the day of death, but that is seldom the case when anyone of tribal importance dies. They wait till the last of expected relations or local chiefs arrives ; the latter show their importance by their slowness to come. Meantime, often immediately after the death, a rough coffin has been made. If the death is that of a coast man one of his canoes will be broken up to be used as a coffin. The grandest coffin I remember was nothing less than a boat, a perfectly good one ; the chief had died in it, therefore it could not be used again. The death was an accidental one ; the horror was great.

The coffin, in many districts, is hung up in the roof of the hut over the fire. People still go on living their usual life in the hut. After a few months the coffin is opened, and the bones gathered together for burial. The skull is placed in the skull house, and becomes a *mana*-carrying object, and demands sacrifice and prayers from time to time. These grow fewer naturally as time goes on, and, except in a few cases, within a generation or so the skull still in the house will no longer receive any individual attention. Sometimes the body is placed on some outstanding rock out at sea till it is reduced to a skeleton, and then the skull is brought in. The bones are not much thought of. They may, or may not, be collected and buried, but pieces are often preserved to be placed in shrines as relics.

Earth burial is quite common, in very shallow graves ; the size and number of the stones piled on the grave show the measure of esteem thought due to the *mana* of the dead. All work in connection with burying is paid for by the inevitable feast, small or large. Tree burial is resorted to by some tribes in the bush, the tree serving the same purpose as the rock out at sea, as a temporary convenient place of deposit till the skull is ready. However the body is dealt with, the skull must be accessible. Then comes the day when the skull is placed in the sacred hut, or, in the case of a very small village, in the chief's house. Only the "priest" has access to the hut. He generally lives in the enclosure surrounding the sacred place. He is its guardian, and he knows the words of incantation that will draw favourable *mana* from it. He, too, acts as prompter to the careless when sacrifices begin to slacken in number. All skulls seem to have some *mana* proportioned to their power on earth. The old chief who made his tribe great becomes a spirit of great reputation for perhaps generations ; the little child spirit is prayed to for a while by the father, whom the child spirit, as still a child, "can help a little bit." The vagueness of the native feeling as to the spirits' powers or wishes makes their superstitious fears illimitable. They have no formulated creeds, but very intense feelings of the reality of the unseen powers around them.

Immediately after a death the spirit is felt to be very near, still haunting hut and village and track. For a few days, after dark, every hut is closed fast, and the fire kept well alight. If anyone is com-

pelled to go out they do so fearfully, waving a flaming bamboo stick or a blazing coconut leaf in front of them. Of course, some one is almost sure to have an encounter with the spirit during those first days of fear. A rustling leaf at twilight may easily become a manifestation of the spirit. Or any sick or fevered native may be liable to be visited by the spirit in his dreams. A sensitive patient will often take this as a message of death, and proceed to die. They lie in such cases, gloomy and silent, in a corner of the hut and refuse food. Relations crowd round, but only add their wailings, or mournfully fondle the patient.

The best remedy is to drag such a case out into the daylight, and then these terrors may be dispelled. But that is the last thing a native would do unprompted. Then, after a little while, the spirit of the dead is thought to have reached the distant "Hades." Every island has some local "Hades," where the spirits are gathered in a dim, vague, fading state. Generally some uninhabited islet at a considerable distance from the main island is the spirits' abode. It is uninhabited and unvisited, a place of dread. I do not know of any definite beliefs as to these spirits, but they are still powerful and can be invoked. The native mind seems to imagine two souls : one near, located in the skull, the other far off in this "Hades." But all seems vague and unformulated. Anyhow, whether or not there be two souls, the personality is one.

The close connection of the spirit with the skull accounts for their dismay in the case of a death when the body, or the head, cannot be recovered. Death

in battle where the enemy carry off the head is an extreme disaster. Death by drowning where the body is not recovered is almost as much dreaded. A head carried off must, if possible, be recovered. There is a skull of a Mala chief in San Cristoval captured at least one, or more, probably two, generations ago. A few years ago there was a sort of annual expedition from Mala soon after the south-east trade wind set in, to recover this skull. They did not actually get the war party into active service each year, but always they began to make preparations, and, at any rate, generally started. The probability of their arrival was well known, and they never effected the projected surprise attack. Sometimes there was fighting, occasionally killing, but generally the expedition accomplished nothing more than scouting work before they returned.

A case occurred a few years ago of the killing of a chief's daughter in her canoe on market day. She was shot, and the body fell into deep water and was not recovered. Her father was almost crazy with grief and rage, but the one dominant horror was the loss of the body. He relieved his feelings by taking a solemn oath never to touch *taro* (his favourite staple food) till he had avenged her death. Years afterwards he was still bound by his oath. I have quite recently heard that he has had his sworn revenge, and is once more eating *taro*.

It is the horror of death where the skull cannot be recovered that accounts for the many oaths of vengeance taken against the white man in the days of the labour traffic between the Solomon Islands

and Queensland and Fiji. A ship would bring back the time-expired men, and nearly always there would be one at least missing ; he may have died in Queensland or Fiji. Then an oath would be sworn to take a white man's head in return, and very large sums of money would be put out to encourage an attempt to kill him. The most likely victim in those days was the recruiter. For he had to land on the beach to get his recruits for labour, and might be suddenly attacked, or shot from the bush hard by. Failing a white man, and for a much smaller price, one of the party returned, who had originally recruited with the dead man, would be an acceptable victim. The senior of the party was the one desired. As a rule, however, he did not reappear, but signed on for another term of labour in Queensland or Fiji, where he was safe.

But their memories do not, generally speaking, go very far back. They remember with extraordinary tenacity the feuds or promises of a generation back ; but as a rule by the third generation the veneration for the spirit has grown very faint. There are a few great spirits who must have been demigods, so to speak, for many generations, but they are very few. Hardly any natives seem to have memories going further back than tales of a grandfather. Of the few heroes memories are stored up in song. All night long they will chant the exploits in war and love of one of the great spirits. There is a strong comic element introduced into the recital, recording mischievous pranks ; some of these stories are rough and coarse, but many are really humorous and of the nature of fairy tales.

Afraid as he is of death, the native nevertheless faces it as a rule very quietly and stoically. He is half paralysed by fear ; indeed sheer fear of dying is the cause of many deaths, but also his fatalism comes to his aid. The native who can openly face death is much respected. Many a Mala man is alive to-day who has been trapped by a killing party, but has faced it, saying, " Kill me if you like, I don't mind," or perhaps, " Kill me if you can, it's not in your power to do so unless it's allowed." The would-be killers hesitate, begin to waver, and finally depart, feeling that it would have been uncanny to kill so confident a victim. The average native is a timid man, but I have known a few who would risk their lives for a cause or a friend. I recall one case of a man doubly bold. Rather than betray his trust, deserted by every single soul in his village, he slept alone—that was in itself very daring—under threat of a visit that night of the formidable Iroqata, a great fighting man. His object was to prevent the breaking up of his village. Iroqata did not appear, and his boldness was successful. His people returned at daylight to find him safe. Iroqata had not appeared. Such threats for the purpose of intimidation are seldom carried out. Under their courageous teacher the people settled down again in the village from which they had fled.

Another case that I remember of contempt of death occurred in Guadalcanar. A party of Mala plantation " boys " had been away for a week-end, and were due back on Monday. A swollen river blocked their path, but they all started to swim

across. For one, an oldish man, the current was too much, and he was carried out to sea. His younger chum turned back to help him, but, finding that impossible, gave up the attempt, and crying out, "Well, if you die, I die too," allowed himself to be swept out to sea with his companion. Neither of the bodies was recovered. What, one wonders, was in that young man's mind? Affection, feeling of responsibility for his chum, dread of vengeance from the spirit of one he had failed to aid, fatalism—all these perhaps, and more, combined to impel him to choose death, and overcame the terror of it that would be his first instinct.

There are a good many signs of mourning, both temporary and permanent: tears and tearing of the flesh at the time of death; a blackened face, unwashed for months; a lock of the hair of the dead one tied to the mourner's hair over the left temple. A shell is worn also (I think generally) over the left temple. These two last are signs of vows of vengeance. The mourner's heart or stomach—one word covers both—is uneasy, and has not yet found relief in vengeance. In one Mala tribe it was customary for the widow to swear that she would eat no more cooked food while she lived. It meant a very hard life of semi-starvation and a premature death, but the vow was kept. There are tales of old days, "the good old times," when widows were killed to accompany their husbands to the spirit world; also of the sacrifices and eating of any available captives or semi-slaves that the tribe might possess. But I have no direct evidence of this from eye-witnesses.

Under the stress of this terror of the mystery of death the naturally good-natured, soft-hearted, happy-go-lucky Solomon Islander becomes a brooding, sullen creature, possessed by an unnatural lust for the death of a fellow-creature. Some become permanently perverted characters, but with most the cloud of brooding passes till another death that touches them brings it back again. The reaction after a great funeral feast is a double one. In some cases it relieves the strain, and they return to normal life ; in other cases it stirs to flame the smouldering embers of vengeance. Existence under such conditions is only not absolutely intolerable because a new and exciting death switches their minds away from the old, and many a feud is tacitly dropped as a new one springs up. In some cases, too, settlement of feuds is made by payment of money, and friendships are renewed. Personal enmity is not, as a rule, strong, but only keen desire for something that will "quiet the heart" of the seeker of vengeance. Under the combined influence of Christianity, which bids them hope ; civilization, which subjects them to exterior law ; trade, which works against their destructive instincts, this feud life is becoming outwardly a thing of the past ; the dead are quietly buried, and the living go on their way unarmed and unapprehensive. But still the old fear is very deep rooted, and magicians are still appealed to, and the old question is still often, though secretly, asked, "Who has caused the death ?" Probably nowadays the solution of the problem is far more frequently than of old that the dead have brought about their own death by their own misdoings or neglects. A dying



A NEW HEBRIDES MAN.

The long locks of plaited hair show a Polynesian strain.
The club is for support not attack.



A WOMAN OF VELLA LE VELLA, N. SOLOMONS.

The curious "bustle" is the characteristic fashion of this part.

person is often sorely pressed to confess what he or she has done to cause their sickness or accident. A growing sense of personality and personal responsibility is emerging in this, as in other directions.

C H A P T E R X I X

“*Tapus*,” Curses, and Oaths

THE daily life of the Solomon Islands is hedged and guarded, restrained and regulated on every side by *tapus*. These *tapus* are innumerable, affecting every action, and are of varying power. A *tapu* may differ in force from a weak personal effort to restrain another up to a forbidding under penalty of death. So breaking a *tapu* may mean merely laughing at the remonstrance of a child up to defying long inbred terror of certain death and disaster. But always underlying even the weakest child's *tapu*, practically “Please don't” or “You must not,” there lies an appeal to the spirit world to punish the infringer. And so *tapu* has immense power in native life. In many things it forbids permanently and firmly, and entails perhaps much self-denial and suffering to keep. It is the substitute for intelligent moral law in native life. And often there is both good sense and moral feeling underlying an outward appearance of foolish superstition.

The conscience of the primitive man works by fear ; once free from that he is at the mercy of the vilest instincts, and only restrained from absolute degradation by whatever share of good nature may naturally pertain to him. The strongest *tapus* are tribal, those which bind a whole tribe by one law.

For example, one tribe may never eat pigeon, another a certain fish, and so forth ; a coast tribe is bound by countless *tapus* affecting nets, canoes, and such things, from which a bush tribe is free. The bush man's life is ruled by countless garden *tapus*, which do not necessarily affect the coast man. Each tribe, too, has its own peculiar *tapus* handed down by long tradition. For example, a party are digging ; some disaster befalls them while digging, or happens to their village—a chief's death perhaps. Henceforth from generation to generation it is *tapu* for that tribe to dig, or perhaps the prohibition is limited to a particular place or time. So it is with the tribal food.

A white man may provide what he thinks is a feast for his boys, to find that only some of them can enjoy it ; to others it is forbidden food. If you wish to give anything to a chief who is a stranger from afar out of the bush, you had better give him a tin of something. That he can take away and inquire about of his witch-doctors or friends—men in touch with such things. Food already put out for him he will be afraid to touch, though he will politely wrap it up and take it away. So again natives will appeal to a white man not to shoot a shark or a turtle, for it is their “forbidden food, *tapu*.” The ancestral spirit may be there. A very few miles away the death of turtle or shark is a delight, but there perhaps the pigeon coos serenely, *tapu* in the tree-tops.

Many *tapus* are individual ; they affect only a particular person or a particular piece of property. Many of them help to defend the weak against the

strong. A man, for example, will tie round or attach to his coconut tree or banana plant a *tapu* mark, and so appeal to the spirits to protect the fruit against the ravages of passers-by. The average native respects such a mark. A hut, in its owner's absence, will be thus safeguarded for months. A little child who has found a nest of eggs will mark it with a *tapu* sign as his find and property. When so much is common property, and borrowing with vague promises of repayment continually going on, such *tapus* are very useful. There comes a time in native life, to be seen at work now, when in growing contact with civilization, where the old spirit fears are weakening and the force of exterior law is not yet fully established, during which thefts become increasingly common. The individual *tapu* is slackening ; the legal restraint is not strong enough to act.

Again we may think of *tapus* as *permanent*. They bind till death. Intertribal marriage, for example, is *tapu*. A man may marry two sisters, but can never marry his cousin. But this, too, is breaking down as the white man's customs become known, and the old fears of spirits weaken. Among the sea folk a woman lives all her life within a few yards of nets that she has never seen made, of canoes that she can never enter, and of a landing-place on the islet on which she never set foot. A man lives his life within touch almost of a skull-house into which he has never dared to look, and sees others eating food that he can never taste, or doing work that he can never share in. All such restrictions seem very narrowing, cramping, and unnecessary, but they

are woven into the whole complex texture of native life, and are worthy of respect. These must, and ought to, vanish, but this should be a slow and considerate process. A *tapu* destroyed, without something better taking its place, is a loss to native life. The best may often become the enemy of the comparatively good.

Temporary tapus are found everywhere, and affect life at every stage. The commonest of all is a *tapu* till some one's death, whether a death to be sought for, or death waited for in the ordinary course of nature. A man binds himself, or others, not to eat something, or not to go somewhere, till so-and-so is killed or dies. A party going for two or three months' porpoise fishing, or on a war expedition, can have no women near them till their work is done. Such *tapus* are often followed by a period of license at the feast that marks their end. The *tapus* that a chief imposes are effective till his death, or till the period of days or months imposed lapses. A chief's death is often a relief to a village in this way. In anger he may have imposed some foolish *tapu* which holds them fast. At his death they can make a fresh start, renew a broken alliance perhaps, or plant a food patch that had been banned, or grow coconuts on a space prohibited. Many temporary *tapus* hold a village till the final funeral feast is given, then they are free.

On the top of all there comes *self-imposed tapus*. A person, in grief, or haste, or from religious motives, restricts himself under *tapu* from something he would normally do. This may apply to anything in his daily life, and is often of the “cutting

off the nose to spite the face ” order. The nose thus severed is difficult to replace before the set time. For such *tapus*, often foolish, are respected both by the individual and his neighbours, however irksome they may be. These self-imposed *tapus* demonstrate the individual’s strength. He may be very much in love and want to “show off,” or very angry, or sulky, or grieved, and all his world must know it. It is a sign of the individualistic instinct cutting across the tribal. It may be done to annoy or bring to order his wife, and to weaken her opposition to his domestic rule. For example, “You can’t go to market to-day, for it is *tapu* for me to go with you,” may annoy her more than him. The wife would quite readily defy him, but the neighbours would refuse to take her with them in such a case.

This brings us to *protective tapus*. Of such are the string tied round a tree, or a mark set up in a garden. Where knowledge of reading and writing exists, a written paper is often stuck up, or words carved on a piece of wood erected to warn off all passers-by. Cherished possessions are thus protected in the house. A neighbour asks for fish teeth or tobacco from his friend’s little store. “I won’t ” would be an answer involving a row. “I can’t because it is *tapu* ” is accepted, however reluctantly. So a wife may protect her little possessions from a greedy husband. I remember the case of a man who took a stick of his wife’s tobacco to give away to a visitor. The wife returned and found out what he had done. Great was her fear and rage ; for hours, till exhausted, she shrieked out *Si firi inau!*—“My piece of to-



THE HUT OF CHIEF QAISULEA.

It is built out off his artificial islet on a lagoon. It is close to the main island, but the water between makes it secure from bush attack.

A MANGROVE SWAMP.

The twisted roots are above ground and suggest writhing snakes. Below is thick black ooze. Crocodiles haunt these swamps. The timber is hard and durable.

bacco !” The poor man was sorry too late ; the tobacco was *tapu*. She did eventually cool down, and I fancy her tobacco was safe henceforth from depredations. They were quite a happy couple together normally. The woman, I remember, packed what clothes and possessions she had in a grass bag, and rushed down to the beach, and was just setting off in a canoe to her own village. The husband was helpless and appealed for aid. I rushed down to the beach just as she was setting forth, seized the grass bag, and carried it up to my house. Fortunately so, for the woman, after long hesitation, crept back again, unable to part from her bag, and after more shrieking and wailing entered her hut, and harmony was restored. The grass bag was also restored next morning, and they “lived happily (so far as I knew) ever after.” If once she had got away there would have been a great deal of tribal worry over the precious stick of tobacco.

Vengeful tapus I have mentioned. The commonest signs of such being in force are prohibiting food, wearing a lock of hair or a red flower over the left temple, or a blackened, unwashed face, or body smeared with ashes. These *tapus* last till the duty of vengeance is accomplished, and may therefore be seen on the individual concerned for years. In rare cases they are abandoned without satisfaction given.

There are also *mourning tapus*, apart from vengeful ones. Such is the unhappy plight of the widows in a certain district of Mala, unable to eat cooked food till their death. Their diet of nuts, fruits, etc.,

obtained from the bush is very precarious, and in many cases not enough to sustain life. They grow weaker and weaker, and soon die. A blackened face may denote merely grief, and not revenge as well. Shaving of the woman's head is, I believe, in some places a sign of mourning. If the unwashed state of the mourner annoys him or her as much as it does other people, their grief must be very sincere. I have heard of life-long abstention from water for washing, but have not come across a case of it personally.

Sex tapus, of course, are very numerous, and of immense value. The separation of the sexes begins early. A boy very soon leaves the family hut to sleep in the men's house. A very little girl will be *tapued* from entering or coming too near the men's quarters. At the age of puberty the *tapus* become severe. The boy or girl is secluded, and prepared by a period of very strenuous and very nasty existence for adult life. In decent villages the youths and girls are kept in order. A boy and girl within the prohibited marriage degree may go about together fairly freely, even go fishing at night together with the tribe. But those outside marriage prohibition are *tapued* from anything but the most distant intercourse. In adult life *tapus* still reign. A man may not use his mother-in-law's name, or that of other relations by marriage. If they meet on the bush track the woman must vanish into the bush to let them pass. A man passing by a garden speaks to, or jokes, or gossips with a woman not among her own folk at his peril. Under the head of sex *tapus* may be placed also the vast number of customs

regulating the working life of the sexes. The man has his work, his net, canoe, weapons ; the woman has her work, canoe and so forth. The man *may* do woman's work (but he does not often avail himself of the privilege), but the woman cannot do the man's. A kind husband, for instance, could take his wife's canoe and set of bamboos and fetch water, or carry firewood for her when she was ill, but the woman could not enter her husband's fishing canoe, or take an implement of his and do his work. Those birth customs of which I have written in a previous chapter come, too, under the head of sex *tapus*.

Tapus of dignity may close our list. The dignity of an old Solomon Island chief of the best type was so natural and real that it needed little outward sign to mark it. A real chief showed his power by wearing few or no ornaments, and carrying no weapons, unless he was a young man and still of fighting age. But certain *tapus* protected his unmarked dignity. No one must step across his outstretched legs, or take anything hanging overhead where he was sitting. He walked first of the line of followers on the track, and, unless he chose to take the steering paddle, sat in the canoe as a passenger. Instead of a club, he would carry a chief's ornamental stick, which was a sort of sceptre which had a semi-halo of sanctity attached to it. In tribal counsels his words, or still more his silence, carried respectful attention. But in ordinary daily life there was little outward sign of dignity. In fact, absence of all symbols and ornaments serves to emphasize his greatness. Others wear clothes bought from the stores ;

the chief does not. Others stick on bracelets, breastplates, nose-rings, and innumerable other ornaments ; the chief goes bare. Others chatter and fuss and shout orders ; the chief nods silent assent or refuses by not even nodding. He sits quietly in the middle of the canoe, or in the central place in the village palaver. He is more felt than seen.

The bulk of *tapus*, of course, is traditional and needs no fresh proclamation, but when a new one is imposed it is done, if tribal, by the chief's word, and many-tongued rumour soon carries the report everywhere. Or the drum may proclaim the lifting or the imposition of a *tapu*. When the omens are favourable and the due sacrifices offered, gardening, porpoise fishing, fighting, hitherto prohibited, may begin. A formal message may be sent round, or the drum tell out the news. Private *tapus* are made by signs, a piece of twine, or a band of leaves, or a stick stuck up in the ground or water will suffice to *tapu* house, tree, garden, fishing pool, and all that is therein.

Akin to *tapus* are the very numerous oaths taken by the natives, generally in moments of excitement, often of the nature of curses. These may involve the taker and bind him, or be invoked on the objects of his wrath. Of the former are “bad words.” These may be horrible cursings, or words that seem to us comparatively mild, like “fool” or “mischievous fellow.” But if “bad” words, they alarm and terrify. A bully, ready to take offence, will easily find a “bad” word in very harmless expressions, and extort compensation. A sensitive man will brood, terrified and expectant of evil, and pay to

have the word taken off. But the real “bad” words are universally felt as dangerous curses. When a wife curses her husband it is terribly bad, and a life must be taken by the husband, as I have told elsewhere. And the big curse is when the drum calls the tribe together to avenge an insult or a wrong. That is properly a tribal affair, though individuals presume to proclaim such a curse occasionally when beyond themselves with excitement. This is annoying to the tribe, who don’t want perhaps either to fight or to pay atonement for the curse drummed out and heard for many miles around.

Rash oaths, imposed by a man or woman upon themselves, are very common and take all sorts of forms. A boy or a girl in a temper may swear never to enter again their parents’ hut, never to use their canoe, never to eat of their food, or of anything cooked by them, never to look on their faces. And they are bound by such oaths till the death of one of the parties concerned. Some years ago such oaths were extraordinarily numerous in the island of Gela; in every village were people longing to be freed, but knowing no way out. Great was their relief when the Bishop of Melanesia’s release was accepted by his people as valid, and scores of old enmities were healed up that would otherwise have lasted for a lifetime.

Tapus can only be broken in three ways. Either the imposer must relax them if directed against another; or a spiritual power recognized as stronger than the spiritual power of the *tapu* must intervene, and overrule the prohibition; or some bold man of more than average daring must defy them, to be

followed by others when once the prohibition is broken. But reckless breaking of *tapus* is mischievous, for, even if foolish ones, they lie so deep in the whole of the native's social life. It should only be done when the case for it is clear. The white man is often impatient of what seems senseless and inconvenient ; the “ boy ” returned from Queensland has learnt to doubt or scorn what was often a wholesome restraint. He will marry a wife without paying for her, or help himself to fruit from a *tapu* tree, or defy his chief's prohibitions. It is much better where Christianity and civilization gradually undermine them, carrying with them the people's assent and conviction. On the other hand, there are plenty of cases where to defy a *tapu* is wholesome. For example, to land on a *tapu* place long left vacant in fear and eat there means the release of the people from their terror of the place, and opens it up for use as garden or building ground.

Marriage *tapus* deserve especial respect, except where it is clear that only greed or hatred imposes them, and may be inflicting life-long misery. For example, where a boy and girl have been betrothed in infancy it is better, as a rule, to do all possible to overcome objection on their part, for they will probably settle down to average happiness. But there are cases where the contract should be broken if fair terms of reparation are offered.

There are many cases where nearly all the relations are willing to arrange a desired marriage, or free from an unwanted one, but one or two, and those perhaps the least concerned, insist on a con-

tract being fulfilled, or refuse a marriage desired and desirable, and because of *tapu* their refusal is binding, unless overruled by some form of *force majeure*. The tyranny of a minority is often very real in the Solomons under *tapu* protection.

But as a general rule *tapu* should be respected, and only painlessly disappear. For instance, on a plantation not long ago a squad of boys was told off for a day's job of digging a trench. They had never given trouble, but on this occasion looked sulky and defiant. They might have been driven to the task with strong, contemptuous language and abuse as idlers, but, wisely, the manager took the trouble to inquire. He found out that, owing to an ancient accident in the tribe connected with digging, it was *tapu* for that particular tribe. So another job was given them, and all was peace. For the rest of their time the manager had willing instead of sulky workers, and the workers were free from conscience-stricken fears of disaster, and proneness to die of the least ailment. Such a *tapu* will disappear of itself in time. A bolder spirit of the tribe will go and dig for his own purposes and survive, and soon others will follow his example.

Not all *tapus*, of course, can be thus respected, nor are all white men patient enough wisely to do so. They think it smarter to see only another excuse for idleness or disobedience. But where the white man is known as one who respects the natives' feelings, he will be far better able to break *tapus* that are really harmful, and let the tolerable ones perish, self-destroyed. The native can in this way be helped to pass with his self-respect intact from a

primitive state into a wider, freer world. To smash *tapus* by force weakens his vitality and saps his independence. But the foolish *tapus* he himself breaks lead him naturally to a wider, less spirit-haunted life.

C H A P T E R T E N

The Bush Man

TO cross a large island is not easily or often done. It is a great adventure even for the natives. There are very few tracks from coast to coast, and to use them means passing through hostile territory, or going near villages of very doubtful friendliness. Still, it is sometimes done after much talk and preparation. Women and a few big children will be of the party to show that the expedition is an entirely peaceful one. Warnings, too, will have been sent beforehand, and generally from each village passed a friend or friends will be secured to introduce the party as friends of friends. Or perhaps the night will be passed in the bush away from any village. Such a party have to take the chance of meeting roving *omeas*, bands out to kill, who may, or may not, interfere with them. It might lead to awkward memories of some old feud which there was a safe chance to renew, or each party may be so frightened of the other that through sheer terror a bullet will be let loose, or a spear thrown, and find a lodging in a human body.

However, they take the risk now and then, and go and return in safety. They walk through the bush by the narrow, winding tracks and its dense, green vegetation, listening for each sound from the

unseen world immediately on their right and left. The men go first, armed, constantly looking behind them as they go, as well as from side to side ; the women follow, loaded, carrying heavy loads. It is a long walk, though not many miles are covered in a day ; each " sleeping " may be about fifteen miles apart. But those miles are of steep, rough ascent and descent till the top of the pass is reached, and then of descent and ascent till they reach the further shore. And as the bush is dark, mysterious, rough, yet with beauties of its own, so are its inhabitants. These multitudes of little brown folk, whom the coast people call *mwane tolo*—man-o'-bush—are like the wild creatures of the woodland. They are naked, easily deceived, easily frightened, dangerous when startled, full of suspicion. A stranger is unwelcome, an intruder in their tribal land and home, and yet an excitement in their dull life, and therefore not wholly unwelcome. The " man-o'-bush " is really a humble-minded fellow, and very glad to gain a new friend, but finds it very difficult in his shyness and suspicion to believe in strange friendships. All he knows of life is that some tribes are friendly, and can be intermarried with ; the rest are presumably enemies. His mind works slowly on a very limited stock of material ; his village is a tiny place of perhaps twenty people, all related ; his garden a very rough cultivated patch of ground, as small as he dare venture to make it to stave off hunger, for he will not benefit much by growing a surplus, though the tribe would. His home is a miserable hut, to be entered only on hands and knees ; in it a few mats, a log of wood for a pillow, and

hanging up some tobacco drying, some weapons, a food bowl, and a drum will be on the floor. It is dark, and everything is black with smoke.

The bush man's physical condition, though there are many bright exceptions, is poor. He is often very thin, and full of sores. Then horrible ulcers, left untended and dirty, soon destroy a whole limb, or keep weak and in pain a terribly large number of the bush folk. They take them very stoically, for they bear well the pain of what they can see, and seem to worry less over a great ulcer than they do over a passing headache. A great number of them, too, suffer from skin diseases; there is one in particular—a sort of ringworm—that spreads over the whole body, making the skin one surface of dry flakes. The ashes of the fire often cover the skins that should be a shining, burnished brown, making them dull grey. Betel-nut juice reddens their mouths and blackens their teeth, and is continually being ejected in a most ugly fashion.

Perhaps water is scarce, or a good stream too distant to make the daily wash a regular thing. Pigs and dogs fill hut and village, and that means much vermin. Huts are not properly cleansed, and are too dark to show their swarming contents. The pipe is continually being passed from mouth to mouth, and therewith much spitting. A real bush man is most naïvely surprised when told that he must not spit on the white man's verandah when invited there. It is a curious fad, but he tries to remember. If he does forget, the others who know are great in their scorn of the "man-o'-bush" and his ignorance. A story is told of a bush tribe in

Guadalcanar who send annually down to the sea a strong deputation of their members. The party indulges in a long, delightful bathe, absorb all the salt they can, hurry back to their village to give the rest of the tribe the treat of licking off the salt that whitens their clean brown limbs.

The bush man is content with a few friends. In Mala, roughly speaking, villages on the same level in one district would be allies, those on the lines above or below hostile. For feasting or fighting allies would gather together, and individuals in small parties exchange visits. They would intermarry, and so become more closely allied. A man could always find a home in his wife's as well as in his own village, and vice versa. Discontented or quarrelsome folk could intrude themselves into any allied village; they would not be welcome, but would just come and settle there, knowing that they would not be killed. Occasional expulsion of an undesirable took place, but he would usually, after upsetting a village or two elsewhere and bringing quarrels on them, turn up again unabashed in his own village.

The ordinary daily bush life is very monotonous and dull. There is not enough work to keep the men employed since the introduction of iron and the loss of interest in their own arts, so that many of them spend their time wandering about, making mischief, for want of an outlet for their energies. Nearly every adult has tried at least one spell of plantation work, but that does not inspire them with any ambition to plant for themselves, when they return home, and so earn money. This they could

easily do on the coast ; those deeper inland would not be able, but could find other productive work to do.

Each bush village claims a right of access to the sea through the territory of some coast tribe. Often the track leads outside the coast village to the beach, though when he feels strong enough, or friendly enough, the bush man much prefers to stalk through the midst of the village, and, *en route*, to have a sit down and a long chat there. Pipes are transferred from mouth to mouth, the betel-nut bamboo boxes are passed round ; they probably meant to stay for a few minutes, but may end by staying for a night or two if they find a non-hostile reception and plenty of food about. To send them about their business is, as I have experienced more than once, a *casus belli*. It will begin probably by damage done to the village gardens as they pass through on their way back, or by a demand for money, backed by the name of some local fighting man. So they are generally allowed to stay as long as suits them, however unwelcome.

This access to the sea is very important to the bush man. It is his only way of coming into contact with the outer world. He comes down to his " passage " to recruit for plantations, to trade and so forth, and also *en route* for other places if he can arrange for transport by canoe. In war time the " passages " are closed. Generally a village some distance away acts as keeper of the door to an ally right on the beach, and holds the track against all comers. The bush man retaliates by cutting off the coast people from their gardens and their watering-

places. They are either cut off altogether, and have long canoe journeys to make to buy food and get water and firewood, or else they have to go out *en masse* under arms to dig hastily their food, if gardens still remain unspoiled, and collect firewood, and fill the bamboo water-carriers. This goes on till both parties are tired of it, and a truce is patched up, preferably by an equal exchange of money, sometimes by the submission of one side to a fine.

The bush man's chief pleasure is making, or attending, a feast, and in dancing. It is a weird sight to see a night dance in the bush. If Dante had seen one he would have found ample material for depicting the fiendish. The sight and sound of the naked, though much ornamented, shell-decked, face-painted, leaping figures in the dark bush, lit by the flames of great fires, is not easily forgotten. If it is a war-dance it is ferocious and blood-curdling ; if a dance of pleasure, a marriage feast for example, it is, though less blood-curdling, extremely sensational. The dancers get worked up to high excitement. The spectators take it fairly quietly as a rule, but can be roused to excited admiration. A rush will be made for a successful dancer at the end of a movement, and he will be carried out shoulder-high by his admiring friends. He is expected to reward such friends for their outburst of enthusiasm in his honour. Some dances are rude and licentious, and incentive to vice, but others are artistic and graceful pictures of native life. Some are ferocious and meant to stir up blood-lust ; others are of a gentle, pastoral character, befitting children at play. Feasting

appeals much to the bush man. The main article of a feast is a mash of *taro* mixed with nut ; this is accompanied by fish or pig. When human flesh is eaten it is, I believe, treated as the pig's flesh is. I have heard of boys being tricked into eating human flesh thinking that they were eating pig.

Singing and music have a place among his amusements. Native music to civilized ears is very monotonous and a strain on the nerves. Natives keep it up all night. Tom-toming is a joy to them. The throb of the drum sounds on a still night from far away in the bush from sunset to sunrise. Do not listen to it, for once you do so the throb of it gets right hold of you, and robs you of all rest and peace. The drum is used for defiance, welcome, festival, mourning ; it can, in fact, by its beat, express all the emotions, or stir them if dormant. Panpipes figure largely in village festivities. There is often a village band which goes about from feast to feast. It will number five or six members, who, standing in a ring, blow in unison their panpipes, ending each movement on three loud, emphatic notes.

The bush man finds various amusements in the bush around him. He will take his dogs and go pig-hunting. And very good fare, indeed, is a bush pig, cooked in a native oven. I remember as one of the best meals I ever tasted the spreading before me of a portion of bush pig. After a long walk I had arrived at a bush village about 1500 feet up. We were admitted through a narrow entrance in the heaviest stockade I ever saw. The village was small, but they had surrounded themselves with a double row of heavy tree-trunks eight to ten feet high. The

space between the rows was filled in with soil, and so a most massive stockade, proof against any native attack, was made. One entrance, and that a very narrow one, was closed at night by very heavy timber.

Our arrival was a welcome one, for they were an isolated village, and we came from some distant friends. So to mark the occasion a party was sent out to catch a pig, wild in the bush. They soon returned with a small pig; meantime the oven was being prepared. A big fire soon made hot its lining of stones. The pig was swiftly prepared and its flesh made up into parcels, wrapped in native vegetable and an outside cover of leaves. The fire was withdrawn, and the packages placed on the hot stones. All was then thickly covered over with leaves, and left there till cooked by the steam. The result was a most delicious meal.

It is otherwise with the village pig. That is disgusting fare, all green and fat; but the bush pig is lean and of delicate flavour. The village pig occupies a great space in native life. They swarm round the huts, and in them too, and follow their owners about like dogs. They are prolific sources of quarrel, spoilers of gardens, breakers of fences, and a general nuisance, but they are much prized. I remember one village where the pigs became such a nuisance to the village because of the damage done to gardens, and the attraction they were to night prowlers from other villages, that orders were given to "sack the lot." A great killing of seventy by the chief set the example, but, alas! a few selfish individuals kept shirking their turn, and soon the



CORAL LIME ADORNMENT.

Everywhere coral lime is used for bleaching the hair, and incidentally cleansing it. It is also streaked on the face in various patterns for dressing up purposes on special occasions.

village was as full as ever of pigs. These pigs roam in the bush nearby by day, but turn up at their owner's hut at sunset for their evening meal, and sleep till daylight in or round the hut.

Trapping birds is another bush amusement. Night expeditions after opossums are popular at times ; flying foxes are not unwelcome in the bag. In hungry times they will catch and eat rats. Cats and dogs are not unknown on the bill of fare at such a time. The coast man despises such food as only fit for the *mwane tolo*—man-o'-bush. For the bush man is a very simple and ignorant fellow. He moves and lives tribally. Like a flock of sheep he is easily bewildered and soon panic-stricken. He will believe the most outrageous tales, even from enemy sources. He is very subservient to authority, and changes quickly *en masse* from wildness to mildness or from mildness to wildness. His credulity is often traded on by more sophisticated neighbours, who extort money from him by playing on his fears. In former days it would be tales of some wonderful magic, or some powerful angered chief, with which they would frighten him ; now it is tales of white men whose wrath they will bring upon him. To the bush man, a few years ago, the white man was a wholly capricious power liable to attack you at any time for reasons that he did not as a rule understand. They knew, of course, that there was likely to be trouble if a white man was killed, or a schooner attacked, but even then they hardly saw method or justice at work. The white man's persistence in seeking for the actual doers of some outrage was strange to them. For in native eyes the doers are

not the really responsible parties, but their tribe or chief, or the tribe or chief who hires them.

The idea of a personal responsibility is a slow growth in primitive minds. To them if, for any reason, a white man is responsible for a brown man's death, any white man they can get is justly killed. Corporate responsibility they more or less understand, which can be paid for by any individual of the corporation. So bush men are easily scared by tales from the coast of making angry the white men. Their simple faith in the white man whom they do know and learn to like is equally strong. They turn to him in the hope that there is nothing that he cannot do if only he is willing, and the expectations aroused by his first appearance among them are of a surprising magnitude. The man who has been in Queensland, and seen Brisbane, will tell of its wonders, and expect them all to arrive in the wake of the first white man. In the bush one swallow is looked on as making a swift and sure summer.

In the bush more than on the coast one meets with half-witted folk. A proportion of the people are very dull-witted ; some have apparently no wits at all. These people are generally very amenable. They are fed, and are useful as workers, for generally they obey readily and will accept any simple task set them. Others are very stolid, and quiet, and gentle up to a certain point, but there is a time when they become exceedingly difficult to deal with. Generally they resist by sullen, obstinate refusal of all reproaches, sometimes they become very dangerous and violent. These attacks seem to come on very suddenly and unreasonably, but there is really a

history behind them of patience tried beyond control and at last completely giving way.

Night in the bush does not accord with our notion of the hours of rest. Rarely in the closed, smoke-filled hut are all asleep. There is a perpetual coming and going at all hours. The fire is constantly being blown up and replenished with wood. No native seems to sleep through the night, though his spells of sleep are heavy. He will sleep for two or three hours, get up, light his pipe, chew the betel nut, chatter, perhaps sing. All through the night pigs grunt, dogs howl, children cry ; you hear the snap-snap of the shells with which the shaver is pulling out the hair on his face. A small bi-valve makes an excellent razor. The hair is pulled right out, and if this is done regularly before the roots are deep it is a painless and clean shave.

In many bush villages fires are kept bright, and singing goes on all night to let all and sundry know that the place is awake and watchful. But about four o'clock silence does fall over the village, and till dawn all are quite likely to be fast asleep. This is, therefore, the favourite hour for an attack by surprise, and, though expected, often succeeds, for the village simply cannot keep awake any longer. A systematic watching by turns does not work out well if attempted. For a few nights it may succeed, but soon breaks down. There is too little excitement and too much method in it to suit them for long. The best night sentry I ever knew was a man who for months kept watch, often alone, by night and slept by day. He knew that he was " wanted " for witchcraft, and that it was safest for

him to be awake at night. In the day, in the middle of the village, he felt fairly safe. So he was, for two or three years, then he was caught at last in broad daylight.

In the bush are quite a considerable number of wanderers and runaways, roving about and living mainly by theft. They lie hidden in the bush during the day time, and pillage gardens at night. Some of these are half-witted folk ; they generally get killed after a very short career. Others are fugitives who have sinned against tribal law, and have no place to go to. They often take to killing to establish a position for themselves. There are to be found, too, tribes who have no territory of their own, but live a freebooter's life ; they rove about the island, and live on what they get in the bush, or steal from the gardens. They are outlaws. One such tribe I know of that had had no gardens of their own within living memory. They were a small tribe, but were much dreaded, were very active and secret in their movements, and numbered fourteen fighting men—quite a large number, for those of an *omea* who actually fight are usually very few. These predatory tribes are recruited, I believe, from runaways and outcasts. They are not really tribes, but bands of lawless folk, extribal and homeless.

The bush man, until recently, was very difficult to get at for purposes of control. The only method was an occasional expedition into the bush by an armed party from a man-of-war. These were seldom successful. They could reach and burn a village or villages and then return, followed by various potshots from the bush on their way back ; but they

could seldom lay hold of those they wished to arrest, or bring to conference and amendment a troublesome district. A man-of-war would appear occasionally and drop shells into the bush; these frightened the natives to a certain extent, and a district would be quiet for a time after such a visitation. But these methods could not settle or civilize an island. Now native police are established in most of the islands. Their work is not ideal, but is certainly more efficient than the old spasmodic effort, and is likely to improve and become really useful. The best police are often those who in pre-police days were the fighting men and the givers of trouble. The old principle of turning the poacher into gamekeeper holds good in the Solomons as in England.

What the bush really needs, and will doubtless get some day, is roads of a good width right across the islands, from village to village. The bush once opened up would be quite amenable to control, and no longer serve as a safe hiding-place for all ill-doers. Then the great majority of the quiet and well-disposed would have a chance to emerge into the open and develop for themselves a healthy life in the daylight. They are very simple, ignorant folk, but not, if given a fair, unhurried opportunity, at all incapable of mental and moral growth.

The bush woman is even simpler and more ignorant than the man. She is as near a wild animal as a human being can be, even more superstitious than the man, and living in an even narrower world. She grows old very rapidly. She generally bears a large number of children, or rather used to do,

nearly all of whom died very young. Her life is a toilsome one, and her pleasures few. She is allowed to be an onlooker at feasts and dances, but generally has to be content with that. There is a danger of the men advancing in culture faster than the women, and then being dragged back by them. There are some women of influence and ability to be met with, and also here and there good mothers. But each is a *rara avis*. They serve to prove, however, that the woman is not inherently on a lower plane than the man in primitive races, though her whole environment tends to make her so.

The population of the bush is very difficult to estimate. In large islands there is a varied density of population. In some large districts they are very thinly peopled, while other parts seem to have all the people that the district can support. Villages are very often moved, and new gardens opened up, so no district can be really numbered. There is a tendency to move down to the coast, where life is more in the open and in touch with the world outside. The tribes, too, higher up like to move downwards when they have a chance to where it is warmer and life less dull. Probably the making of roads inland would tend to counteract this tendency. The bush, once opened up and accessible, would be quite as attractive as, and more spacious than, the coast for home and gardens. "Man-o'-bush" would then cease to be a term, more or less, of reproach, and his good qualities would have a chance to show themselves.

C H A P T E R E L E V E N

The Coast Man

THE coast man of the Solomon Islands should in environment, habits, and culture be contrasted with his brother in the bush. In the large island of Mala, owing to their fighting habits, the contrast is perhaps more marked than elsewhere. The coast man speaks with something of contempt of the "man-o'-bush" as less of a man of the world than himself. The coast man is quite at home in the bush, he can do all that the bush man can do, though less perfect in some bush craft perhaps; while the bush man is awkward and timid in a canoe and on the sea, and knows little or nothing of fishing and all its lore.

The coast man is, of course, more in contact with the white man, and is often intermediary between trading schooner and bush. He holds the outlets to the harbours and lagoons, to which the bush man has indeed a prescriptive right of access which he can only enforce by right of custom and power of numbers. On the other hand, the bush man holds the gardens, and can keep the coast man on the shore, or confine him to very small garden land easily raided. They are hereditary foes, and live in a state of perpetual hostility tempered by truces necessitated by their mutual need of each other. The bush man requires fish and access to the sea; the

coast man wants vegetable food and access to the bush tracks.

In Mala their settlement of the problem is unique. There the majority of the coast men live on artificial islets built by themselves on the lagoons. There is a chain of these lagoons round the island, with long intervals between, and the people living on them are linked by kinship, language, and intermarriage, and by frequent visits by canoes, into one allied body. They have their quarrels, but against the bush they combine together.

The coast man's curious home is worth describing. A shallow spot on the lagoon is selected, with deep-water pools round it. The larger the pools round the better the site. To this shallow spot are carried large stones, and a rough platform of stone rising just a little above high tide is formed. The platform of rough stone is packed together with cement of broken coral and sand. It is then protected from the sea by piles of large and heavy timber fencing it round and holding it together. On the stone platform is erected native huts. The islet thus made is being continually added to, as fresh arrivals need a home, and the huts are built close together. A space is left for the making and storage of canoes and for community life.

One side of the islet contains the chief's house, with a stone altar hard by. In it, or in a separate *tapu* house, are placed the venerated skulls of the tribe's ancestors and any especially sacred objects to which *mana* is attached. These are tribal, but are under the guardianship of the chief



TAKI, AN OLD SAN CRISTOVAL CHIEF.

In his youth a famous fighting man. He lived to nearly 90. The paddle shows the narrow Solomon Island type. The canoe is inlaid with pearl shell. The frigate bird on the left is the usual design found everywhere.

and native "priest." On this side round the chief live and work the men, and the bachelors' quarters are here. Here too are hung out round the edge of the islet the nets to dry ; and here nets are being made and repaired. No woman dare come to the netted side, or land there. The nets and fishing canoes kept here are *tapu*. A woman may not even see the net-making process. If she does by accident, and blunders within sight, the net is defiled, and a life must be taken to propitiate the offended spirits. She cannot—again the penalty is death—put foot in a canoe that carries the net out to the lagoon for fishing, but must use her own small canoe or share a larger one that goes to market.

On the other side of the islet live the women and children. The families are large, though thinned by a very heavy death-rate. They have their own canoes, and their own access to the islet. This is not *tapu*, but can be used by all. On the older islets in the open spaces there may be found a dancing ground in the middle. From decayed refuse of wood chips and food a soil has been formed, and a few coconut trees and other vegetation spring up.

The population of these tiny islets is very dense. On the largest known to me four hundred people are living in huts on a space that can be walked round in a quarter of an hour, together with pigs and dogs—all, of course, on the ground floor. A few natural islets are used in the same way by the sea folk, and here there is more air and space. On one of them, Uuru, live two tribes. They are generally at peace, but have still between them a fighting

ground, and live under different chiefs, with their own tribal spirits to guard them.

The advantages of this islet life as contrasted with the ordinary coast life are obvious. They have first and foremost a clear space round them, and are almost immune from attack in their homes. They are right on the spot for their daily fishing, and can build their canoes and make their nets in peace. The disadvantages are that in war time they can be cut off by a bush party from water and wood, and from their gardens ashore. This difficulty can be got over by longer canoe journeys to friends on other islets. The constant living in and on the sea keeps them cleaner and healthier than the bush people, and their open-air, long canoe journeys give them a wider world to live in than the bush man in his dense forest has.

Some thirty years ago a very able coast man, *Qaisulea*, by his cunning and success in fighting became practically chief over all the sea people. His policy was a wise one, though merely directed to gaining wealth and importance. On the one hand, he liked to keep friends with the labour ships; and to supply them with men, he needed to keep on terms with the bush people. This he did by arranging for marriage between bush and coast, and by encouraging the bush people to come down to recruit for labour. The marriage alliance gave him access to gardens ashore near his islet; the recruits brought him in presents from the labour vessels. He thus secured a state of modified hostility, punctuated by occasional murders. He was also able to interfere in intertribal disputes, and did a

large traffic in bringing boys by canoe from various villages, to be killed by the village to which they were consigned, as a preliminary to making peace. A fee for himself from each tribe concerned was part of the bargain.

Qaisulea was an able man in his way, very unscrupulous and treacherous, but preferring peace to war as being more remunerative. He was a great orator, with a wonderful command of strong language and impressive gestures, and by loud assertions of his powers and dignity impressed the native mind. I remember well my first two interviews with him. The former visit was a sort of state call soon after my arrival, when *Qaisulea* was anxious to impress me with his dignity, and make me a white man under his protection and control. I at that time spoke no Mala language, and his English was very elementary and of the "pidgin" variety. But his appearance was very impressive; after a due time of waiting he appeared in white drill suit, spotlessly clean, sun helmet, sash, and a broad smile. The gist of his oration of welcome was "All Mala belong of me. Me very great king, and me look after you so no man-o'-bush kill you," and so forth.

My next call was to remonstrate with him over his trade in boys, and to try and save the life of a boy who had just been landed on his islet *en route* for a hostile tribe, to be killed there. So I was not very welcome. In he bounced, stark naked, with a very sulky face, without any ornaments or outward mark of hostility, a natural *Qaisulea* as few white men saw him. It took a long time and threats of invoking Government punishment to bring him to

terms. The end of it was a compromise such as he loved. He took the boy concerned into his tribe, thus securing a desirable addition to his stock of labour, and repayment for preserving his life. It would cost him a little doubtless to settle with the bush tribe. The method he adopted I never could ascertain, whether money, or promises, or threats, or a promise of another life. But I have reason to believe that no life was lost over the settlement in exchange for the one saved. He was a cautious man, and had many enemies ready to tell of his doings if they knew them likely to bring him into disfavour.

This man's death is worth telling of for the light that it throws on native superstitions and native contact with the white man. *Qaisulea*, growing rich, bought a whale boat that he might travel in state, and also go fishing at his ease. He also obtained, illegally, some dynamite cartridges to go a-fishing with. Now a dynamite cartridge, lit, with a very short fuse, is very useful for throwing into a shoal of fish, if thrown quickly. You may get two or three hundred good *buma*, a very edible fish running about three-quarter pound in size, even allowing for the many that the sharks get as they and the crew compete together in the water. The sharks swallow as many as they can gorge ; the crew are busy throwing into the boat or canoe as many as they can get. Neither shark nor man take any notice of each other.

But to return to *Qaisulea*. He was not quick enough. The cartridge exploded in his hand as he held it to his ear to make sure whether it

was burning, and the great sea chief lay dead in his much prized boat. Great was the excitement. The problem was to find out who had killed him, and then how to exact a suitable vengeance. The boat could no longer be used ; no one would dare to do so. It was made into a glorified coffin, in which rested *Qaisulea's* remains on his islet till the time came to take the skull and place it in the skull-house for sacrifice and veneration. Meantime the author of his death was being sought for. It was in vain to point out that *Qaisulea* had killed himself, for in Melanesia no death occurs, and especially the death of a chief, and very especially the sudden death of a chief, except through some malignant spirit set in motion by an enemy. A witch-doctor is called in to find out the enemy.

The process of finding out is described later. The supposed guilty man found out by it is marked down and doomed to death. It may be next day, next week, next year ; a decade, a double decade may elapse. Still his doom hangs over his head. However many moons may elapse, he is still in danger of being surprised and killed. He may die naturally first, if fortunate, but that only leaves behind the further problem as to who has killed him. Is it revenge taken out of human hands by spiritual power tired of the long wait ? Or is it attack from some other quarter that has baulked the long-planned but never carried out attack. If the former supposition is accepted then nothing further will be done. But if the latter, there is another reprisal due. Some expect one thing, some another. This gives a glimpse of the intricate cross-complications

of fear, ambition, superstition, affection that cloud the native mind, and make their actual doings so fitful and irregular. There is yet another complication. Perhaps, as in the case of a man, Amasia by name, who was killed, a son, a small boy, survives. The boy's name was Inia. Nearly thirty years have passed since his father's murder. There are still left those who would, if they could, kill Inia too, lest he should kill them. Inia is a Christian and a teacher, and the danger before him is now very small, for they by now realize that there is no danger from him. But that has taken years for them to grasp. At first the look-out for him was keen, and he had to be very careful in his movements, and stick closely to his village, or only move about in the company of a party of friends.

In *Qaisulea's* case a chief of a neighbouring artificial island was fixed upon as the criminal, and the hunt for him was set on foot. His tribe refused to give him up, though daily at low tide the men of the deceased *Qaisulea's* islet marched out over the uncovered parts of the lagoon to the neighbouring islet, a few hundred yards off, and vociferously challenged the Sulafou people to give up the accused man, one of their four chiefs, or fight. Gardens were mutually raided and destroyed, every day envoys arrived from the bush to each islet offering alliance, at a price. The hunted man hid awhile in a friendly village ashore, tried to escape by canoe, but was hotly pursued, hid just in time to see the pursuing canoes pass by, doubled back to his islet, and was finally fetched by a Government schooner to a police station fifty miles away, nomin-

ally a prisoner, but really to protect him; stayed there till the storm blew over and the disturbed district settled down again, then returned home. He may yet be killed if any breeze springs up again between the two islets, but, being an old man and as the fame of the dead *Qaisulea* fades out, he may die in peace.

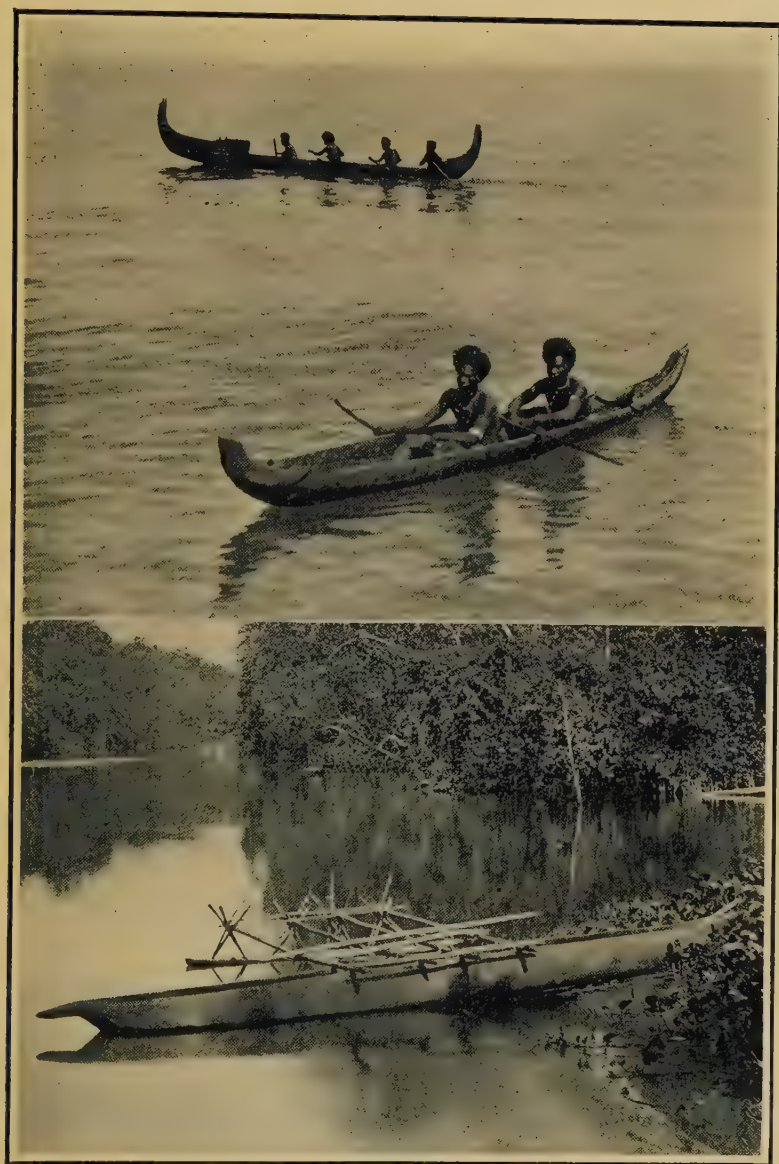
This incident multiplied a thousand times may, *mutatis mutandis*, give some idea of the daily life of Mala about twenty years ago. There was no long interval at any time without some such incident to excite and enthrall them.

Add to this the unceasing hostility of the bush and coast, and it will be understood that the Solomon Island man lived in a state that made occasional peace very welcome, and the hope of a settled life very alluring. They never knew when or how a time of peace might be broken. I remember once a coast man coming for one of his almost daily visits into the village where I was. He had, as usual, his gun with him, and a cartridge in it. He found sitting in a hut a bush man come on a friendly errand. But this did not please him, so he let fly with his gun from outside through the hut, and fled, hoping he had killed his victim. He had better fortune than he deserved: the bullet missed the bush man, and just grazed the head of the coast man's brother, who was sitting outside the hut on the opposite side to that from which the shot was fired. Had *he* been killed there would have been trouble indeed. As it was, the matter was settled by Daomai, the aggressor, giving me shell money worth five pounds to hold as a pledge for a year, returnable on his good behaviour. I am glad to say that he got his money back.

But even Mala coast men are not always fighting. They have their work to do, and there is much to occupy their time. The canoe is his first care. There is his own canoe for daily use to take him ashore, his wife's, very likely his daughter's ; then there is the larger canoe for market, the fishing canoe, the tribal canoe : all these need constant attention and repair. There is pretty sure to be on hand a new canoe in process of building, from the one-seater, that a small child can use, up to one capable of holding one hundred and twenty men. The last canoe of this size likely ever to be made was broken up a few years ago after only two voyages, as too big for practical use. So on any of these islets you will generally find men at work, and hear the chip-chip-chipping of the adze, and see the litter of fresh wood chips falling on the old, gradually forming a soil covering over the stone platform.

Then there are the nets to make and to mend. The old men roll over their thighs the fibre of which the string is made. A big net of about one hundred and fifty yards in length takes a great deal of making and keeping in order. The small hand net of thin string for catching the sardine-like little fish in the shallows means delicate work and constant repair. Then when net and canoe are both in usable order, and the tide is low, and the lagoon lies dry except for numerous pools, some of them almost small lakes or tarns, comes the time for the daily fishing of the pools.

They are approached by narrow canoe channels kept open from pool to pool. The time may be any hour, day or night ; the tide determines



CANOES.

The two above are typical small trading canoes, on a lagoon, seated for four men. The "dug out" below is on the river at Fiu, N. Mala, and is the work of Solomon Islanders who had seen dug-outs in Fige, and found it a labour saving type for river work.

that. There is the tribal fishing, joined in by many canoes, when one or more of the large nets are used. Perhaps an order has come from the bush for a thousand fish, *buma* for choice, to be ready for a feast a month hence. It is time to begin to get together the number required. The canoes, piled high with the huge nets, wind their tortuous course through the channels, and spread gradually the net or nets in one great semicircle round some pool. Then all hands join in to drag the pool. Generally the result is good, but the getting of the thousand fish in addition to their daily requirements for their own food, and for barter, means a good many draggings of the pools, and that can only be done at low tide for two or three hours at the most. The men land the fish, the women smoke-dry them after packing them in leaves, and carry them, escorted by the men, all armed, by canoe or on foot to their destination.

There are certain market days called *usia*, and market-places, generally on a beach, but sometimes a clearing in the bush, occurring every three or four days. It is announced at each *usia* how many *teola* or sleepings there will be till the next. There bush and coast gather, for normally there will be no *omea*—fighting expedition or armed raid—to be feared.

Each village gathers apart, the armed men standing by, watchful and suspicious. The women gather together in the middle of the open space, and do their trafficking. The bush women gladly rid themselves of their enormous loads of vegetables and fruit, baskets of yam, taro, bunchés of bananas,

strings of pineapples, and so forth. The coast women, who have come comfortably by canoe, deliver their fish, and take in exchange for one *buma* weighing about three-quarters of a pound, ten yam or taro weighing perhaps a stone. The canoes are quickly loaded amid a loud fire of mischievous gossip, most of it idle conjecture and suspicion, to be related to the excitable males later on with further adornments of very doubtful veracity, and the market comes to an end. Both parties are glad to get away without some row springing up suddenly, leading to wild clamour and perhaps shooting.

Besides the tribal fishing, there is individual fishing. Many coast men and boys go out alone with small net, or a bamboo rod and a line, to get what they can for themselves. There may be enough for a meal, or there may be a surplus for sale. If the catch is small, the man generally, on returning, throws his catch on to the fire, takes it up for scraping the black off two or three times, then, when sufficiently broiled, eats it. If there is a surplus it is wrapped in leaves and cooked in ashes, or in an oven more slowly and thoroughly.

The coast man does not always keep to his lagoon or his special fishing pool. He is constantly at sea, journeying up and down the coast to visit his sea friends on other lagoons, on a trading expedition to buy pigs or vegetable food, or on a distant fighting expedition, attempting to surprise some bush village.

Out at sea he will not have far to go before sighting a turtle floating (asleep, he hopes) on the water. Up creeps the canoe in breathless excitement and

silence. One man stands bending forward, ready to spring from the bows. He alights on the surprised, sleepy turtle's back sometimes; more often the turtle dives to safety in the depths before the canoe gets near enough for the spring. The turtle jumped on at once dives, the man holding on till it comes up again within a minute or so, in ninety seconds possibly. By that time several men are in the water ready to turn the turtle over on its back, and lift it helpless into the canoe. Occasionally man and turtle both disappear to be seen no more. The supposition is that the man has incautiously got one hand over the edge of the turtle's shell at the neck, and so is trapped when the turtle raises its head, and is dragged below and drowned.

But the most interesting and exciting time of the coast man's fishing life comes with the annual porpoise season. The season lasts for two or three months, and used to be the quietest season of the year in Mala. My personal knowledge of it is confined to the north-east end of Mala, the most important part of the hunting.

In those days *Qaisulea*, of whom I have written, was head of the business. When he gave the word canoes from various islets assembled, and about one hundred to one hundred and fifty men came into camp under rough leaf shelters round the harbour selected. These men had first been purified by sacrifices and incantations before leaving their islets. Many petitions to the spirits, *agalos*, had been vociferated for success in their enterprise, for fair weather, numerous porpoise, and successful catching of them. All the men, not too

old or too young, from an islet would be there, or perhaps a detachment only. It was understood that, though islets were left with only old men, women, and children on them, there would be no attack from the bush. The bush folk liked porpoise flesh and feared *Qaisulea*, so the compact held good. No women were allowed near the porpoise hunters. Their presence would be fatal to success, and an offence to the *agalo*.

The men stayed about a fortnight or three weeks at a time in camp, others coming to set them free and to take their turn. As a rule the presence of Christian natives, however expert, was not desired. Any failure was apt to be set down to their neglect of the *agalos* and unwillingness to eat of the food sacrificed to the spirits. But sometimes they were allowed, if more men were needed, to have a camp of their own, food of their own, and their own worship, and join in the sport.

Every morning, if not too rough, scouting canoes would go out to locate a school of porpoise, after certain sacrificial rites. The school located, all the canoes would put out, and get behind them in a semicircle. Then with clashing of paddles and loud yellings, the school would be driven towards the harbour. Considerable skill and energy was needed to prevent the porpoises from breaking back to the open sea through gaps in the semicircle of canoes. Once driven into the harbour they were easy prey. When near the beach the hunters leaped overboard and dragged, two or three to each porpoise, their prey ashore ; once ashore they were speared to death. Huge fires were lit, and after the

extraction of the teeth—two hundred to a porpoise, valued in exchange at ten to the shilling—the flesh was cooked and sold to the bush men. Porpoise flesh is strong and very odorous, and the wind carries the smell of the cooking many miles. In the best season that I can remember about six hundred porpoises were caught. Crafty old *Qaisulea* stopped the hunting for the next two years to keep up the value of the porpoise teeth. His own share was about two-thirds of the catch; the remaining third he distributed among the men, roughly, I believe, in proportion to their personal success in killing the porpoise ashore. The porpoise season ends in feasts and more sacrifices.

After a rest comes the fair weather season, and that means the going out of the big war canoes on war enterprises. There used to be two expeditions which were a sort of annual or bi-annual fixture, one from north-east to south-east Mala, another to the island of San Cristoval. Both, I believe, has as their object the recovery of the head of a chief, captured two or three generations before and in possession of the enemy. Neither of the heads was recovered in my time, nor was there any serious fighting, but the preparation for the expedition and the week or two of its absence were times of much excitement and expectancy.

A great, and not perhaps a wholesome, interest in the coast man's life is the increasing intercourse with white men. Up to about 1904 an occasional labour vessel from Queensland or Fiji brought back old labour and recruited new hands, and that was the only contact with the white man. That

traffic happily came to an end. Now innumerable schooners follow each other, or lie at anchorage together in every harbour, getting labour for plantations on neighbouring islands. Mala is the chief recruiting ground, but labour is sought from the other islands as well. In most places there is a pidgin English-talking native, an old hand, who, in conjunction with his chief, acts as intermediary between the bush and the schooner. Fighting and other occupations are suspended, and the natives devote their time to hanging about the schooner in canoes or sitting on its deck, till warned off at sunset. So the schooner's frequent presence is helpful towards keeping the peace, but harmful to native industry. It makes the white man think that the native is always idle, which is by no means the case, and it takes the boys away from the village just as they should be learning to work in their own homes and gardens. A good deal of trading goes on, and that takes up much time.

The Solomon Islander likes a party of ten friends with him, and two or three hours at least, to conduct negotiations over the purchase of a shilling belt or a fathom of calico to a successful conclusion. The best time for recruiting is just after a fight. The defeated side is in a panic, and its available manhood ready to recruit wholesale.

On the whole the coast man's life in Melanesia is a busy and healthy one. He is kept clean by his continual contact with salt water, canoeing is vigorous and exhilarating, he is a keen and expert fisherman, and he sees more of life than the bush man. His chief danger is of taking too easily to a

false and over rapid civilization. He is tempted to buy boats instead of making canoes, to use steel fish-hooks instead of his own, to desire far too much clothing and tinned foods. He is really a fine fellow and worth preserving from destruction.

C H A P T E R T W E L V E

Fighting

U P to a few years ago in islands in the Solomons that were still wild, peace, except for short, uncertain intervals, was practically unknown. Everywhere any individual or tribe might be attacked anywhere at any time. At any moment, day or night, in any village or garden or, more rarely, in a canoe, a killing might happen. Then followed shouting, drum-beating, rushing together of armed men, wild excitement and confusion, gloomy, scowling faces, threats of revenge, terror, general confusion, a rush out of the village to tear up gardens or do some damage, or a quick counter-killing of some harmless connection of the known or suspected tribe, or else a cowering in the village, wakeful, noisy nights, and no work done. Then the storm would gradually die down, and the normal life for a time be resumed. Months or years afterwards reparation might be exacted. There was no rest till they "got square" by a life taken, directly or, more often, indirectly, or by a money settlement. If tribe A wanted a life or money from tribe B, they would secretly pay tribe C to do their killing. Or sometimes tribe C, if strong enough, would for a consideration undertake negotiations. At first all seemed wild, purposeless, and confused, but gradually one learned that there were, after all, certain rules and a kind of method in it all.

Probably the main cause of this state of things was the firm belief in witchcraft. Death to the Solomon Island philosophy is unnatural, caused by spirits. These spirits may be those of their own tribe, neglected, therefore angry ; but far more probably it is some spirit of another tribe who has caused the death. If so, it is because that spirit has been invoked by an enemy. And so tribe lived suspicious of tribe, with but little intercourse, and that little always heavy with fear of possible evil machinations under a guise of friendship. Besides all this intertribal warfare was the eternal feud between bush and coast. If you were a bush man, and a coast man killed a bush man, or vice versa, then interbush or intercoast feuds would be dropped for a time, and there would be an alliance of tribes on either side against the common enemy. The actual number of killings in " war " was very small, the number of threats and attempts to attack and demonstrations in force enormous. A battle was practically unknown, but the killing by gun or club or spear would be done suddenly, if possible when suspicion, suspicious of its own suspicions, was lulled for a time.

Some particular cases, a few of very many that came under my own observation, may serve to illustrate this general description. Take first a case of open hostility with its rules of warfare. Tribe A for some reason or other sees fit to resume or start a " fight " with tribe B. A messenger comes to announce a " state of war." It may be more or less intense. The message may be, " We are going to destroy your gardens as a punishment," or " We are

going to sally forth and blockade you till we have killed a member, old or young, of either sex, of your tribe," or "This is a big fight ; we are going to harass you till we have got a fighting man of your tribe. The women and children we shall let alone," or, in extremest cases, "We are out for a body to carry off, cook, distribute, and eat, then your *mana* will be extinct, and your place know you no more." Sometimes a time of hostility is set : "We are going to fight you for three days, or a week, or a month ; if we do not accomplish anything in that set time we will go home." This last method is fairly harmless, and as a rule only annoying. The threatened tribe would counter with threats of what they would do, and challenge the enemy to do their worst ; a big bluster would be met by a yet bigger one ; go-betweens would pass to and fro, bringing "news." "Look out ; the enemy are really coming to-night," was a very usual message to each party. Then each tribe would shut itself up in its village, singing in dark huts, waiting for the attack till daylight. Slowly the affair would fizzle out.

Far more dangerous to life than these noisy affairs were the killings done by professionals. In the bush lived and roamed certain bands of men who were always ready for hire to do a killing. The most ambitious attempt would be to get a white man's head, which would bring in a very large sum of money. An *omea* (war-party) on such an errand might walk into a village at any time. They enter the village towards sunset, chat a while, then gradually take up various positions two by two about the village, ready to shoot and run at a given

signal. Their object is to isolate and to get, if possible, behind the victim. One I remember being thus surrounded. Just at sunset, the critical time, an armed party of friends arrived, called by a woman who had seen the *omea* from her canoe and paddled off to tell a neighbouring friendly tribe. They stood by till the *omea* departed. The killing would be done at closest quarters, generally by rifle or club, and then the *omea* would take to their heels and disappear into the bush. Just before sunset was the chosen time for their attacks, then the escape into the bush was easy, and the darkness a sure cover. Sometimes they would announce their intention of staying for the night, and a very uncomfortable night would follow; there might or might not be a sudden attack made. Sometimes an *omea* would demand a life from the village to make matters square. But as a rule no tribe would give up one of its members, unless in their opinion he stood convicted of witchcraft. Then they would be passive and allow his execution. For these men were to some extent a sort of police. In a rough fashion they act as executors of justice, killing men guilty of murder by witchcraft or exacting fines due.

But they also will undertake any kind of killing for money. A certain sum, so many pigs, so many yards of shell money, red, white, or black, so many thousand porpoise teeth, are displayed by a village who wants a life. Iroqata, or some minor follower of his profession, gets a party together and sets forth to earn the tempting sum. He tries to secure his retreat first by squaring a neighbouring tribe to let

him come through. The threatened tribe, on the other hand, are perhaps relying on the squared tribe to warn them of the approach of the *omea*. These killings for witchcraft are a long and elaborate process. Let us take one case in detail. There was a man known as Joe Sili. In his youth he was suspected of witchcraft, and fled to Queensland. After some twenty or thirty years he returns, lives quietly for a few years in a "school" village. A baby dies in that village. Surmises rise; is it Joe at his tricks again? Another baby dies a few days later in a village close to. "It must be Joe's doing." The chief of the neighbouring village takes the matter up, hires Iroqata, and bribes the chief who holds the track from the bush to the school village to let Iroqata through. A big dance is given near by to cover Iroqata's arrival, and stimulate him and his party. Joe knows he is being hunted and keeps in the village, sleeping by day and on watch by night. As to the school village, they half know, half suspect, but are cowed to silence, and not prepared to fight for the man they deem guilty. One morning, for he has secured his safety, Iroqata and party walk in, and after a little apparently friendly talk two of them get close to Joe and shoot him through the head at close quarters, then tear off into the bush.

In some such way many used to be killed, but more still were killed unexpectedly. A woman, to take one example, loses her temper and curses her husband. To take the disgrace of the "bad word" off, the man must kill somebody. Gun on shoulder he stalks off to a neighbouring village where he is well known, a familiar guest. In this case there was

living there as teacher, a boy from another island, Gela, a safe victim, and also welcome, for there was money out for a Gela life due for a row in Queensland. So James Ivo, the Gela boy, is stealthily shot from the back door of his hut by his "friend," who had been chatting with him and had just bought a belt from him and gone out by the front door. Then the usual rush into the bush and escape. And the man returns to his village, his *mana* restored and his wife's curse rendered harmless.

This same man, James Ivo, had had a previous somewhat similar experience which ended more happily. James was on a journey into the bush, happily with a friend, a man used to being instinctively on the watch. Suddenly a shout from the friend with him : " Ho, there, don't shoot ; it's a friend with me." The gleam of a rifle barrel levelled at James, from a few feet away, had caught his eye. It was a bushman, cursed by his wife, looking for a life, and seeing in James a stranger, his victim. But a friend's friend was exempt, and the three were soon chatting together, *en route* for the aggrieved one's village, his vengeance deferred, and very likely abandoned eventually for good. Another instance may be given. Two men set out to take a white man's life for a large sum of money offered. They find a white missionary alone in a small " school " village. They enter his hut, armed, and as usual sit talking first, waiting to fire and run. Suddenly, his boat's crew, who had gone for water, return, and the men make off quickly.

The first starting of " school " villages is a very frightening thing to its neighbours. They harass

them, try to drive them out, kill the chief people concerned, or anyone they can catch. But after a while they find their fears groundless, and if the "school" folk persevere, as they nearly always do, and refuse to be driven out, acceptance follows, and schools begin to multiply unopposed. The Solomon Islander accepts failure. He tries, fails, and then gives up the attempt. His failure is a sign that he has made a mistake. One man will cheerfully tell another how he had a shot at him the other day hidden in the bush as he passed along the track. "The gun missed fire; luckily for us both, was it not?" There is strangely little personal hostility in their feuds. The friendly, treacherous manner so often assumed is not all a sham. Only under great—often deliberately stimulated—excitement do they see really red, and openly fight with lust to kill. Their real dispositions are normally mild and gentle. Hence the terrorism that a few bullies and braggarts are able to exercise.

A certain amount of fighting used to take place on the sea, but that was rare. The war canoes were transports as a rule, not "men-of-war." Before they set forth sacrifices would be offered, and charms to secure fine weather be put on. The canoe would be decorated, and go forth with great display. In some islands head-hunting was systematically pursued. Great war canoes from Rubiana mainly would raid neighbouring islands—Bugotu was a favourite hunting ground—and return with as many skulls as they could collect. This cruel business came practically to an end in 1899, when under Government auspices an expedition was successfully

organized to break up the war canoes of Rubiana. At one blow that reign of terror came to an end. I remember a sea attack carefully organized to capture somebody, whether a white man or a brown one was never made quite clear. The proposed victim, anyway, was supposed to be in the boat in which, returning from a distant village, I had to pass a certain harbour known as Atta Bay. Three large canoes were got ready, and lay hidden behind their islet. One, furnished with a lofty mast and flags, shot out as we passed and pursued the boat. "Now we die finish," groaned the boat's crew. But they rowed steadily along as though seeing nothing unusual. This, no doubt, seemed uncanny to the canoe warriors. They came up alongside, peered everywhere and saw no weapons. It was very puzzling. At last, after a brief consultation, they turned back. The other two canoes, we were told afterwards, were waiting to see a flag go up to shoot out and take their share in the attack.

Weeks of excitement and preparation, and then a collapse if favourable omens fail, is typical of their warfare. A native was looked for for years ; three times *omeas* formally set out to his village. Once the rain sent them back, another time they turned back for no known reason, a third time they reached and surrounded him. "Kill if you like," he said. "I am not afraid of you, but you can't kill me unless God allows it." This challenge so daunted them that they deemed it safest to leave him alone, and Peter still lives on, his early years of constant trouble over.

A chief's death used generally to mean a time of

confusion and fighting, for the question was urgent as to who had caused it. Also, if he had been a big chief, and dominated his district, his death gave opportunity to other tribes and chiefs to assert themselves and rise in power out of the confusion. Living as they do in an atmosphere of mutual suspicion, it is very difficult for the Solomon Islander villages to make peace. One recognized way of doing so was much exploited by *Qaisulea*, the sea chief. Of the giving up of a victim to be killed, and the subsequent setting forth and exchange of presents, I have told. This account of their fighting and underhand methods may leave a false impression that the Solomon Islander must be a very cowardly man. He is not so really, but superstition makes him so. There are plenty of brave men to be met with who will die for their faith or for a friend. But fear of witchcraft cows them, and they are like to what we are if under the influence of ghostly terrors.

Their deadliest weapon used to be the short club, used at close quarters to shatter the skull. But the rifle took its place, used also at close quarters. These rifles were smuggled in from Queensland and Fiji, until that traffic came to an end in 1904. The hope of returning with a rifle and some cartridges was a great incentive to recruiting for the sugar plantations. Quite a large number were smuggled in, and some white men made shameful profit thereby. Every rifle and cartridge was made the most of. When an *omea* set out they went armed with all the rifles and cartridges that they could borrow in their district. The exact number available was known, and each cartridge fired meant a human life.

Barrels that had split at the end would be shortened, and new stocks, very ingeniously made with their poor tools, fitted. The bearer of the rifle took big risks, and sometimes suffered by the bursting of the weapon as he fired. The cartridge—one was a treasure—was carried in the rifle, and the rifle carried pointing anywhere, so those in front or behind on the track were not too safe. But accidents on the whole were marvellously few and far between. Bows and arrows were carried by some, but only for want of a better weapon, for they were very little used. Spears were carried, about half a dozen in the hand for rapid, successive throwing; but the short club was the favourite weapon when the warrior had not a rifle. To most big fighting expeditions there was a very large following attached, when it was a proclaimed fight, to do the shouting and challenging.

I remember experiencing for many days the progress of a so-called “big fight.” First came the message brought by a friendly native: “Look out, you people of Norefou, an *omea* is preparing. It’s the real thing this time. A heavy depression is moving towards you,” about represents the natives phraseology. The village shuts itself up, or moves out only in large numbers. Scouts are sent out. They creep into the bush, with grass or leaves on their heads, to gather news. Of that there is no lack. Messengers from neighbouring villages arrive, many of them several times a day. They also carry back news to the enemy. A villager, I remember coming back from scouting, “I saw three thousand men doing ‘fall-in,’” drilling for attack. That

meant, I presume, an ex-police boy lining up and teaching shoulder-arms, etc., to a band of warriors. Then the news was that the enemy were camped quite close and in large numbers. A sensible man remarked "the more noise the less danger." There were a lot of them there. But they were more to demonstrate than to really attack. While this was on, the H.M.S. *Pylades*, on surveying work, called in. Before leaving, a show of searchlight flashing up and down the coast, and into the bush, ended that particular *omea*.

Usually the fall of one man, when rifles are popping off haphazard, or spears being thrown at dodging figures, ends the battle. Each side flies back to its camp or village. Then the question arises : Who will venture back first to carry in the fallen man ? If the enemy gets him it is a great triumph ; if his friends, the loss of the battle is considerably mitigated, and the *mana* of the tribe is much less tarnished. His skull will rest in his own village skull-house. If the enemy get the skull, and it is an important one, great efforts will be made to recover it. When a fight is openly proclaimed the men put on all their war ornaments and smear themselves with paint, white and red, and look as ferocious as they can, and make the utmost possible noise. When a real killing is meant by stealth, they strip themselves bare of ornaments and clothes, and crawl about the bush covered with a bunch of leaves fixed on the head. They hope to surprise a passer-by on the track, or some one working alone in his or her garden. Probably more were killed in this sort of way than in any other kind of fighting. A little

child going out of its hut in the early morning, or a half-witted man wandering vaguely in the bush, or a man or woman working near the bush in their garden alone, would be easy victims.

The question is often raised as to whether suppression of fighting is a boon or not. Fighting is often supposed to provide them with manly excitement, and its suppression to leave them nerveless creatures subject to ennui and decay. Well, perhaps physically chronic warfare may be good to a certain extent ; it keeps them on the move and in energetic motion. But that is the utmost that can be said for it. For it is the child of fear, and breeds unnatural cruelty and cowardice in otherwise kindly and well-disposed people. No one can see a village in a state of *omea* at close quarters and feel, " Well, it does them good after all." They are either childishly excited, and silly with fear and confusion, or sullen and brooding. It is not pleasant to hear the children of a village shrilly cheering a canoe full of " heroes " returning decorated, in triumph, after killing a little child, or a woman, or a half-wit. I doubt if the children are any healthier or virile in proportion to the amount they get of such stimulants. For the old fighting, which meant skill with bow and arrow or spear, and training in their use, something may be said ; but the primitive native with a rifle is not an object to admire. True, the professionals whose trade is killing are generally men of more than average courage and activity. The best thing to do with them is to train them to become Government policemen, and to keep order in the villages—that is, if there is a white official on the island near enough

to keep a sharp eye on them and a strong hand over them. The poacher turned into gamekeeper is an old solution of a difficulty, and often a good one if the master keeps his eye on him.

Twenty years ago it was not unusual to find a village surrounded and defended by a heavy stockade. Large tree-trunks, six, eight, or even twelve or more feet in length, placed close together upright, formed a strong and formidable wall. The labour was tremendous, and done under the stimulus of expected attack very rapidly. And friendly tribes near would come and give help in cutting, carrying, and placing the huge logs. In some cases the stockade was double, with the space between filled with earth, forming a really massive defence. A narrow entrance was closed at night with heavy timbers. Visitors were expected to leave their weapons outside the stockade before being admitted. In the careless, native fashion such stockades once made were left to take care of themselves. They gave a great sense of security, and gave the village a breathing space to establish itself, and then were allowed to fall to pieces. Now they are no longer needed, and probably none are left standing. When a whole village was not thus stockaded, the chief's house, with a small bit of ground in front, was often fenced or walled in ; it formed a fortress in which all the villagers would gather when expecting or experiencing attack. On such occasions women and children were allowed inside. Here the white man visitor would be received and entertained.

I remember a night thus spent at a time when enemies were on the prowl outside. The chief spent

the night singing out at the top of his voice, "There's a white man here. I know you bush men are close to, wanting to kill us ; there's a white man here, so you had better clear out." This went on hour after hour, and was successful in raising the siege. Searchers sallying out next morning found the *omea* decamped, and all was well again for a time. Then carelessness succeeds to excited precautions, and just when all seems peaceful a surprise attack cuts off some villager who has strayed out alone or unarmed. Some casual bush man passer-by seizes the opportunity, and there is again fruitless turmoil for a week or two.

No wonder they are glad when, by missionary influence or Government enforcement, this state of things comes to an end. Then they are free, can move from village to village, have no need of weapons, can settle in more spacious villages, cultivate more ground, plant coconuts that will not be hacked down, make friendships, extend their little tribal world. Life may be less exciting ; it is certainly pleasanter. None of them ever wish to go back to the old style of things.

C H A P T E R T H I R T E E N

House Building

THE size and quality of the Solomon Islander's house, and the amount of work put into its building and preservation, depend largely upon the amount of peace his ordinary life affords him. In restless, feud-ridden districts a very small and rude shelter suffices ; in islands living quietly his house is a much more ambitious structure and his canoe house and latterly his churches are large and fine buildings. The ordinary bush man's hut in Mala in his tiny village is little more than a large dog kennel. Just a rude shelter of bamboo and leaf, with a door so low that he has to creep in on hands and knees. This enforces the entrance of a visitor head first, and helpless for attack, though exposed to it. The people said of the Gela man of whom I wrote, who was shot through the back door, that if he had been a Mala man he would never have built a house of that type ; it was courting attack, for both his doors could be entered upright. The chief's house even in a bush village is somewhat larger, with a dark little back room or cupboard partitioned off, where he keeps his store of money and special treasures. In Gela or Bugotu the houses are large and roomy and well peopled. There is little privacy ; self-invited guests come and go at their discretion, staying as long as it suits them, and,

if a large party, packing the hut tight by day or night. A mat on the earth floor, feet to the fire in the centre of the hut, used to be all the accommodation required. But now a platform for sleeping on, or separate bed places, of bamboo structure, are usual. The Government encourages, and in some cases enforces, the making of a floor, of sago palm wood, raised off the ground. Huts are in any position, scattered about, or jammed up against each other, at the builder's whim. The modern Government-supervised village is in straight rows of single huts. It looks neat and orderly, and is more sanitary, but one misses a something that the old village had and the new one has not. It is a creation superimposed rather than a natural growth.

This is the way a house is built. First the builder who is about to marry, or is moving from his old, dilapidated hut, selects a site. He marks out with pegs a rough parallelogram, according to the size of house he wants. His neighbours all have their advice to give and criticisms to make. He had better not be too ambitious, or he will be accused of wanting to make himself big, for tribalism always sits heavily on individuality. In a tribe, as in a boys' school, it is best to conform to type, or you will be very unpopular. The selected bit of ground is then levelled. Next comes the digging of holes for posts, about—for an average house—eight on each side, four at each end, and three down the middle. If the builder possesses, or can borrow, a crowbar this is soon done. With a pointed stick it takes much longer to prod out each hole. A small boy is a useful assistant. The builder loosens the

earth ; the small boy shovels it out with half a coconut shell. The next stage, and there is often a long pause between each step, is the gathering of material. First posts must be got. The best kind of hard woods for the purpose are well known. The harder the wood the better, for the softer kinds will very quickly be reduced to powder by white ants. In the old stone axe days this post-cutting must have been no small labour. Now there are plenty of axes in every village. The Solomon Isander is a fine wielder of the axe. He enjoys it. A stalwart, well-built native, his brown skin glistening with sweat, cutting down a large tree with a full-sized axe would be a very good model for an artist or sculptor. Friends, who will be rewarded by and by, help to carry home the posts. Then the adze comes into use. Each post is denuded of its bark, shaped, and a V cut at one end.

After the posts are planted in their holes there is probably another pause. The next step is the gathering of the rest of the material from the bush. The side posts will be only three or four feet above ground ; the centre post to carry the ridge pole eight to twelve or more. The gathering together of all the material takes a long time. There is timber for the side plates to be got, and smaller stuff for the rafters first. But the ridge pole is the biggest. It runs the full length of the hut, lying in the V's of the three central posts. Other material to be collected perhaps has to be fetched from a distance. There is bamboo for the rafters and for walls. For the walls whole bamboos are laid alongside each other, horizontally or perpendicularly, or else slit

into thin, narrow strips and plaited into screens. Or the walls may be formed of narrow planks, about three or four inches wide, taken from the bark of the sago palm. All this has to be tied and laced together, and coils and coils of suitable fibres for tying work are brought in. These are torn into strips, and made tougher by being heated over the fire. Then comes the making of the steep-pitched roof over the tied-on rafters. This is made of the leaf of the invaluable sago palm. It grows tall and stately in the swamp. The village is fortunate that possesses a large grove to use for their own buildings, and a surplus to sell to their less fortunate neighbours. These leaves are long, nearly a yard in full length, narrow, about five or six inches, glossy, and thick and strong enough to keep out and turn off the heavy tropical rain. They make a cool roof, though a very dusty and insect-laden one. A well-built roof, preserved by the hut fire, for heat and smoke harden it, will last for, say, fifteen years, or even longer if looked after. The leaves are doubled, and laid overlapping each other, after the midriff has been taken out, over a stick about two yards long. The leaf panel thus formed is tied on to the rafters. In a well-built house these panels are laid over each other as closely as possible, the stick of each right up against its neighbour. But when sago palm is scarce the roof has to be thinner. If you have to buy it, it will cost for a very small hut, as widely set as possible, the sticks perhaps a foot apart, a small pig or its equivalent.

Next comes the cap or hat of the hut. This is made of sago palm too, on a low scaffold on the ground, in one full-length piece. It may be as

elaborate and ornamental as ingenuity can devise, and is often a fine piece of work. For the placing of it over the ridge pole all the village is called in. They shout and cheer loudly as they get under the huge hat, and carry it up the scaffold to deposit it over the ridge pole. From beneath it looks as though some huge, brown-legged centipede under cover was climbing up to the roof of the hut.

At various stages during all the work the helpers have been encouraged by small feasts. After the *kokope* (hat) is on a final feast is given as reward and payment. If our house-builder is ambitious or artistic, he will beautify his home. The walls of plaited bamboo strips, especially in front, will be in intricate patterns. There are certain artists who make particular patterns who can be engaged for this work ; or the builder may be quite capable of making a plain white and black pattern himself. The black bamboo strip is obtained by holding over the fire. If the walls are of sago palm they are often covered over with sago palm leaf, fastened by strips of bamboo. Here, too, is room for ornamental work. Then there are the posts. These may be carved, cut, and coloured to taste, to any extent. They may take weird shapes ; the colouring is crude and bright, red, white, and blue. Red earth supplies the red colouring, lime the white, and juices of plants other colours. Next comes the question of rooms. Nowadays many huts are partitioned into two or three rooms ; formerly only the chief's hut would have a back room, dark and narrow ; this was the tribal treasury. Sometimes a hut will be half ceiled, and the space between rafter and ceiling packed with

nets, if for sea folk ; drums, images, paddles, water-bottles, bamboo water-carriers, or what not. They are grimy with smoke and thick with dust. Possibly the hut has a floor. This will be made of sago palm bark planks, springy and full of gaps. A platform of bamboo covered with mats is laid down one side of the hut. This does for sitting and sleeping accommodation. In the centre is the fireplace : a hole in the ground with a small heap of stones near by marks it. The fire is seldom out, never at night. Instead of a platform perhaps separate bed places are made, each with its mat. It is nobody's bed in particular. The self-invited guest uses it and its mat, or dirty blanket, as he chooses.

The Solomon Islander's home knows no privacy. For further house plenishing the householder will want a few wooden bowls (of pottery he knows nothing) for his food, when he mashes taro or nut into puddings, flavoured with nuts or coconut milk, and a bundle of bamboos with leaf stopper for his drinking and cooking water. Nowadays you will find tin pannikins, a kettle, or iron boiler, or empty kerosene tin lying about ; probably he has a kerosene lantern. The front wall of the hut will be a few feet inside. The space thus left, roofed over in front, forms a verandah with a platform, on which he and his friends sit or lie about, smoking and yarning. Or perhaps he builds out a large circular verandah, added on to the hut ; a sago palm door over a wooden frame closed by tying is usual ; but he may prefer a more massive wooden one, and even indulge in a padlock. This ordinary married man's home is a great improvement on the bush man's

kennel-like hut. It is dark, cool, fairly spacious, often dirty ; he has little use for the tiresome proverb about " a stitch in time " and its saving powers, but once built lets his hut alone till the posts lean ready to fall, rotten at the bottom, and the roof is in holes ; and then he will build another hut, leaving the ruins of his old one an ugly blot in the village.

The building of a canoe house or a church is a much bigger and tribal affair. An enterprising village will take great pride in its public buildings, and likes to go one better than its neighbour. Some of these canoe houses, when life is settled, as in Gela, are very large and lofty buildings, and involve a lot of heavy work. The posts are enormous and massive, and a good deal of ornamental work is done. Such a canoe house will hold two or three large canoes and a number of small ones. They are also used for public halls and guest houses. Their building is a big undertaking and a work of time. It is generally done in bursts, with feasts in between at different stages, to stimulate the slackers, and reward the active ones. Tales are told of how in the old days the canoe house or chief's house would be dedicated in the blood of some captive kept for that purpose. It was apparently a sort of human sacrifice to the spirits. But nothing of this kind has happened, as far as I know, in recent years. The modern victim is a holocaust of pigs. Their number marks the greatness of the occasion. A more recent activity is church building. Every " school " village, once established and settled, likes to have a fine church. It gives scope to their enterprise and

ingenuity. They often put a great deal of labour into it. The size of the timbers is enormous, and there is unlimited scope for the artistic in the carving and adorning of posts, seats, and church furniture. The results of their efforts are sometimes weird and crude, but there is also some very beautiful work done. Their inlaying of wood with shell is wonderfully artistic and delightful. The native enjoys house building. The community work appeals to him, with its noise and bustle and ceaseless chatter.

To see a village triumphantly carrying from the bush on their shoulders some huge trunk or beam, grunting and shouting, and dropping it near the building with a mighty cheer, is an exhilarating sight. Then they like the axe work. The smashing and breaking appeals to them, and is a valuable way of letting off steam. A native, nearly, but not quite, seeing red in a quarrel, longing to strike, but with just sense enough left not to, will seize an axe and work off his rage by cutting and slashing some tree, or perhaps something belonging to his opponent. They are very skilful with the axe, and can fell a tree to a nicety just where they want it. Then the thatch-sewing is attractive. It is pleasant to sit in the shade, in company, bending the sago palm leaves over the light stick, and pinning or sewing them on with bamboo pins. Each leaf is doubled over and pinned through, then the next leaf covers half the one put on, and so till a five or six lengths is complete. In some islands they pull the bamboo right through instead of pinning separately. Each sticks to its own method, and never thinks of adopting the others'. There are also differences in ways of tying.

Each island keeps rigidly to its own. These little differences are interesting, and probably correspond to the differences of character and temperament that the different islands show. The hasty, passionate Mala likes snapping the bamboo into separate needles, pinning each one in with a stab ; Gela, less restless and more leisurely, prefers drawing the long line through unbroken.

It is rather surprising to find that the skull house, though so sacred, is a very ordinary, unadorned building. I have never succeeded in getting inside one, that is for the witch-doctor alone ; nor have I ever seen one being built. They are generally old buildings, and are nowadays, I expect, rarely built. The family house is open to all, and has many occupants. But no woman can enter the men's house. In church they keep rigidly to their own side of the building, and like to have separate doors of entrance. Another modern building in an established school village is the school house. Its educational equipment is very simple : just rough seats, a blackboard, chalk, slates, and letter sheets, and a few books. Their houses lack light and air, and are very smoky ; at night they are closed up and a fire burning. The floor may be damp. So they are not healthy homes, but tend to foster phthisis and tubercular disease. But a well-built, light, airy home of native material is a very pleasant, cool building, and, with the addition of a wooden floor, makes an abode well suited to the climate, and even to the white man's needs, at any rate for a temporary home.

In his youth the native is apt to run wild and be a nuisance to his village. But once he has built his

house and married he generally is ready to settle down and become a decent villager—that is, if his marriage turns out a happy one. And when he has a family growing up round him he usually makes a kind, though over-indulgent father. No Solomon Island village has, or needs to have, a workhouse. The old folk are sure of food and shelter and, generally, of respect and kindly treatment. So in spite of its publicity, the native's house is a real home, with some measure of family life to be enjoyed there.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Canoe Making

IN the art of canoe making the Solomon Islander has made an advance from the most primitive stage. He is not content, like his brother Melanesian in the New Hebrides, with the "dug-out," a tree-trunk hollowed and steadied in the water by an outrigger. Nor has he developed this like his still nearer neighbour in Santa Cruz into the huge canoe, dug out and outrigged, with deck and cabin, capable of taking the open sea and voyages out of sight of land. But the Solomon Island canoe is planked, a graceful and quick craft, lighter, more ornamental, and less clumsy than the dug-out. The range of canoes is a large one. It begins with a tiny, almost toy "canoelet" that a child of five or six years of age can paddle about in "on his own;" it ends with a huge craft capable of carrying a crew of over a hundred. The largest canoe I ever saw was launched about 1906. It was a hundred and twenty feet long, seven feet across the middle, and would seat a hundred and twenty men. This "man-o'-war," as they called it, was built more for show than for use, and there will probably never be another like it. It was the work of one of those artificial islands of which I have written; the people were three years in building it. They built it on their island, completely blocking up the only open space on it,



A SAN CRISTOVAL, ORNAMENTED CANOE.

The double crescent design is peculiar, it is of inlet nautilus shell. The grass cap on the curved prow had probably once "mana" connected with it, but now is ornamental.

leaving only the narrowest of passages to get access. The whole population, about two hundred and fifty in number, were needed to launch it, or pull it ashore. It made three short voyages, and proved to be too big and clumsy for easy handling or paddling, and too heavy to lift in or out of the water, unless a large population was at hand. So it was broken up, and the material used for building smaller canoes. This is an illustration of how native arts and crafts are tending to decay.

There were no doubt in past times many serviceable, swift war canoes as big as the one described (which was only a war canoe in name, and possibly in the builder's hopes and fancies), fashioned in former days with stone axes and adzes. Then came the steel axe and adze. They saved much labour, but did nothing to improve the structure or balance of the old canoe. Soon deterioration in the art of canoe making will become complete, for the sea folk can earn money on steamers as dock labourers, or on plantations, or by selling their coconuts, and buy a ready-made boat. A boat needs a smaller crew, and is stronger and drier than a canoe. It is less labour, for a boat is oftener sailed than it is rowed ; and so they lose pride and interest in the work of their own hands, and more and more like their goods delivered "canned" by the white man. The corrugated iron roof and the boat are more convenient, and keep their increasing quantity of goods drier than the thatched roof and the canoe do, but how ugly they are by comparison. And it all means a growing loss of interest and enterprise in native life. Those very people who built the big canoe

come over to the Government station on Gela in two large boats, fitted with canvas sails, on which they rely almost entirely to get them across. The oars are not got out except in dire necessity. And the old life and animation that stirred them on a canoe voyage, with its rhythmic paddling and smooth, swift motion, is gone. It is an evil day when a people begins to despise the work of its own hands, and goes after strange goods.

But canoes are still being made, and canoe making is still a skilled profession. Part of the work all can join in, but the directing of it, the ornamental work, and the decoration is a special craft. Amateurs do knock up canoes, but for a good one specialists must be employed. The making of model canoes is also a pretty and profitable industry in which a few men specialize. Bugotu (Ysabel) is a great canoe-building island, and other islands often buy their canoes there if they want a specially good one, though they build their own for ordinary use. So to speak, the "Ford" canoe can be got anywhere, but the "Rolls-Royce" is made in Bugotu.

To make a canoe you have first to choose your trees in the bush, selecting the timbers suitable for the different parts. A canoe, say, for twenty or thirty people will need a good big tree for its hull. The tree is cut down, and probably roughly cut into shape on the spot before being carried to the place of making. What emerges from the fallen trunk is like a large and very shallow dug-out with the sides cut away. That is the hull. It is mainly done with the adze by incessant and skilful chipping. Then come the planks for the sides. These, too, are

adzed out till incessant chipping thins the block down to a plank of the size required. Holes are then drilled at frequent intervals along the edges of the hull and plank ; through these strong fibre is drawn, and hull and plank are tied together after shaping the plank to fit the curve of the hull. This sewing and knotting or tying together is done after a set pattern learnt by experience as holding fast and non-slipping. A big canoe will require two rows of planks superimposing. There is no overlapping, but fitting together and fastening by tying. The stern and prow are cut in sharp lines. U-shaped forks of bamboo or harder wood are inserted at intervals in the bottom of the canoe to knit together the sides, and prevent spreading. These also form seats for the crew. At the prow and stern are raised further superstructures of a thin wood, a covering from the sea, and, rising up in a great ornamental sweep, curved to a lofty point. Perhaps a little decking is placed at each end for storage of goods. The prow and stern are shaped like a great, open crescent, a scimitar turned inwards to the canoe.

Next comes the caulking of the seams. A nut called *saea* provides the material. It is collected in the bush, brought in and cooked. The extract is a soft red paste, with which all the seams between plank and hull are heavily covered outside and inside. In a few days the caulking turns hard and black, and is thoroughly waterproof. It does not last very long, but is easily renewed. And now follows the ornamental work, which is limited only by the taste and means of the owner. Right from top to bottom of the lofty prow and stern, picking out its shape,

will be placed lines of white cowrie shells laid close together on both sides round the lofty curve of the prow and stern. The outer surface of the canoe round its sides at the top and on the prow and stern give space and opportunity for unlimited inlaid work in nautilus shell, in intricate, minute, and beautiful patterns. It is a kind of mosaic work done in broken shell, red and white. The devices and patterns are many ; the frigate bird is a very favourite one. The work is roughly grooved out, the grooves filled with the softened *saea* nut, and the bits of nautilus shell, bright and gleaming, inlaid. The nut hardens and makes a firm cement. Various-coloured paints colour at discretion the canoe ; a name is nowadays generally painted on the prow. Rude carved images often deck the craft, or weirdly fashioned men, or birds, or beasts, or fish. An easily movable mast of bamboo is stepped in. The sail used to be of native-made matting, but nowadays is generally of calico bought from the white man.

Canoes are classed and priced and named according to the number of seats for paddling that they provide. The general name for a canoe is *aka* or *faka*, but each sort of canoe has its own name as well. A five or six-man canoe is the usual size for private use. A village canoe for communal fishing, marketing, voyaging round the coast or across to adjacent islands will seat from twenty to thirty, though a good many more can be packed in. Paddles, of course, have to be made. They are shaped out with the ever-ready adze. The Solomon Island paddle is slender and the blade very narrow, but does its work most efficiently. The canoe is very light and

fragile, easily lifted and easily broken. But skilfully handled it can face quite heavy seas and go through a considerable surf. Should it capsize, it can be righted again, and the voyagers resume their seats none the worse for a ducking, though their cargo will have disappeared. In calm weather the motion is smooth and easy and progress rapid. A very comfortable way of travelling is provided by a large canoe. A deck-chair and an umbrella will make it luxurious, so I am told, and it certainly looks so. The paddling is directed by the steersman or captain, who, seated in the stern, sets the time. They change strokes frequently. The usual one is long and slow, then tap, tap, tap from the steersman's paddle in the side of the canoe signals a change, and for a while they will use a short, rapid stroke, soon going back to the longer, steadier one. "Easy-alls" and change of paddlers are frequent and at the individual's whim. A very slight puff of wind is enough to call for setting of the sail, and then perhaps a patient waiting for more wind, even if just enough to move the canoe, however slowly. Jestings and singing and chaff cheer the journey.

On state occasions, such as going for a dance or a wedding, crew and vessel will be decorated to the utmost. If it is for a fighting expedition, they set out with great display of all their ornaments, and look as ferocious as possible. For fishing and market they and their craft go out plain and unadorned. The launching of a big canoe is quite an event even now, though, if old tales be true, a much less gruesome event than it once was. They say that a big chief in the old day would use the prostrate bodies of his

wretched captives as rollers over which to drag down his new canoe to the sea. But that sort of thing must have come to an end many years ago. That large canoe which I have described adopted on its launching a milder and more profitable method. The canoe was lifted by the whole population into the sea, distant only a few feet. Then most of them managed to crowd in. Three times before the canoe was broken up voyages were made down the coast "to show the flag" at all the villages along the shore. These visits were complimentary, but expensive. Each village was expected, with strong, irresistible expectation, to make liberal presents in acknowledgment of the compliment of the call. A "no" was out of the question, and for the honour of the village the gift must be a liberal one. Shell money, tobacco, porpoise teeth, food of all sorts were thus gathered in heaps and brought back to the islet where the monster was made. Some day, some time in this or the next generation, each of these gifts, remembered to the last item, will be acclaimed by the donors or their descendants when they have anything special to celebrate. This stimulates generosity and keeps every place in debt to every other place, which seems to suit the economic needs of the Solomon Islander.

Canoe intercourse and trade with other islands is very frequent. Mala makes the bulk of the shell money and is the great porpoise-hunting island, and the bulk of the plantation labour is from Mala. So they go out and buy pigs and foodstuffs, native tobacco, sago palm leaf, or anything of which their village is in need. The island of Gela, in the centre

of the South Solomons, is a great market centre. Canoes from all the islands round can get to Gela, and Gela canoes frequently return the visits. Calm weather is chosen, of course, for their voyages, though sometimes canoes are too venturesome, and are lost in a storm or heavy surf. Nowadays trips to the stores on Gela and trade with Chinamen are very popular. The arrival of the Sydney steamer at Tulagi is an event, for it provides work for dock labourers with, by comparison with plantation work, high wages. With the money thus earned, and of which he has no need, the recipient buys at the store clothes, tinned foods, etc., that he has still less need of, though his desire for them is great. The store-keeper profits, and all parties are satisfied.

The coast man finds a hundred and one reasons for using his canoe, and spends most of his time in or about it. The repair and upkeep of a canoe provides him with plenty of work. There is always something which needs to be done : retying or recaulking, or a new stern or prow, or paddle, or a net to be repaired, or some job or other. A coast village is seldom free from the cheerful chip, chip, chipping sound of the adze as it shapes out so skillfully plank or paddle or repairing piece for a canoe. Their work is fitful and spasmodic. The two hours before sunset are generally a busy time. But to be tied by time or contract is alien to the Solomon Island methods. The professional canoe maker, if he comes to a village, stays there indefinitely. He works as he would in his own village, at his own time and inclination. A hint to hurry up would be offensive and not in good taste. The average price

of a canoe is about £1 per seat. That is a fair estimate. The date of delivery is a matter of hope and surmise, and cannot be estimated. But at long length, in their casual way, a crew will turn up, bringing the canoe bought in a neighbouring island, or from a distant village in the same island. Then they will quietly sit down in the village to wait for a canoe that may be going from somewhere near some time or other to take them back.

At first they eat their own food brought with them ; then they spend the money paid for the canoe, if they get it, in buying food ; then they go round to villages near where they have some hopes of hospitality ; then they get into debt ; then, if still no canoe happens to be going their way, they will arrange with the village to take them back. Such casual, timeless methods amuse or annoy the civilized hustler. After all, they are suited to the native and the climate, and more common sense and wisdom underlies them than appears on the surface. But it seems futile when a canoe—and I have known this happen often—sets forth to buy supplies for its village, and tarries so long on the return journey that all the food bought has been consumed by the crew. Even so, if a village has been short of food, the absence of a large canoe party will have been a great relief.

C H A P T E R F I F T E E N

Cannibalism

THE eating of human flesh was probably never a universal practice in the Solomons, nor probably was ever extensive, but occasional and sporadic. It was not to satisfy a craving, as in Fiji, for flesh food, but was a solemnity. It was the triumphal sacrifice of a victim ; it marked the extremity of revenge and contempt. Further, perhaps its main *raison d'être* was this : the eaters absorbed the *mana* not only of the victim, but of his tribe, from whom he was inseparable in thought. The tribe of the victim lost all prestige ; the best thing they could do was to break up and disperse and lose themselves among friendly and allied tribes. In Mala the coast people never were cannibals, so they say, and probably truly, though there may have been rare exceptions. But in the bush it was a not uncommon practice up to recent years. In 1905 or 1906 I came into close contact with a village where they had very recently eaten two men killed in a fight. A few years later two women were captured and eaten near the Government station in Mala. It was merely, I was told, as an act of defiance and a gesture of contempt on the part of some bush rangers " wanted " by the Government. There may be an occasional case even to-day in obscure bush villages, but they must be very rare.

The practice is practically extinct. There are plenty of old men still alive who have occasionally eaten human flesh, but very few, if any, of the youths. It is not a thing the average native cares to talk much about, or is proud of, or attempts to justify.

It seems to be more a Polynesian than a Melanesian habit. The Spaniards, the first white men to reach the Solomons, write of it with horror, and as though it was then commonly and openly practised. One of their first experiences was an offer of a man's leg in sign of friendship. Their rejection of it with gestures of loathing was to the natives a declaration of hostility and spurning of their proffered peace offering. The bush folk in the large islands of Mala, San Cristoval, and Guadalcanar were cannibals, but in Bugotu and Gela they were not. The body was generally that of a man fallen in a fight and carried off. Sometimes victims would be kept alive in a village, reserved for a festal occasion. Tales of the fattening up of captives for months may be taken *cum grano salis*. The body was cooked in an oven, cut up, and distributed amongst the tribe and sent to allied tribes. Men have told me how, as children, they were given bits from the feast; sometimes, if they were reluctant and likely to refuse, they would be told it was pig's, not man's, flesh that they were offered. Children were doubtless given such morsels that they might get some portion of the personal qualities of the victim, courage, a strength, a swiftness, or whatever it might be; also they shared thus in *mana* of his tribe, and in the tribal sacrifice very pleasing to their spirits. If a

pig was an acceptable offering to the spirits, how much more a woman or, better still, a man, or, if a man, a warrior, and, if a warrior, a chief. The greatest of all offerings would be a white man.

Sometimes, in anticipation of a victim, the oven would be got ready, and word sent round. That would be a frightful and alarming threat and a declaration of extreme hostility. It would mean, "We are going to fight till we have captured and eaten one of your tribe, and so extinguish you for good and all." I remember great excitement in Mala once when the rumour flew round the island that an oven had been got ready for a white man living on the island. It was probably no more than a distorted report of some bush men's threats, but it illustrates the custom, and the fact that the rumour was believed so readily shows that the practice was not unfamiliar or novel. It was rather amusing to trace the rumour down the coast. The first report was that the white man had been cooked and eaten. Then, nearer his village, that he had been captured and was going to be eaten ; then, still nearer, that he was not yet captured, but the oven was heated, ready for him ; and so the rumour dwindled till it reached last of all, the white man in the village where he was living.

It is noticeable how people who never have been cannibals despise the horrible thing, and how quickly it disappears on a cannibal tribe coming into contact with a wider world than that of their own bush villages. Directly daylight falls on the habit it withers away. This is remarkable when we remember the sanctity of it in primitive man's eyes. That

sanctity cannot bear publicity, and then the horror of the thing is seen, and they learn very quickly to be ashamed of it. The cannibal is *not* a hopelessly degraded brute, lower than the beasts of prey, but a man who has never lived out of the dark obscurity of bush tribalism, and so has blindly followed a practice, deep-rooted in the sacrificial ideas common to man all the world over from his earliest days, distorted by the narrow environment of a lonely bush village. I suppose that Druidical human sacrifices would be offered to-day under English oaks if men from the outside world had never come to Britain.

C H A P T E R S I X T E E N

Witchcraft

THE life of the Solomon Islander is pervaded and controlled by witchcraft. From birth to death, in all he thinks and does, he is under its spell. The spirits are everywhere and in everything. He can never escape them for one moment ; his only hope is to get the help of the friendly ones and appease or control the hostile. His religion, his law, his medicine, his fighting, his trade and commerce, his fun and feasting, his hopes and fears, his plans and devices, his passions and courtings, his art and leisure are all based on magic, begun in magic, and ended with magic. From this, one would imagine that the witch-doctor, his priest, doctor, lawyer, and general controller of his activities, must be a very important personage and very prominent. Of course, he is a person of immense importance, and yet, apart from his office, he does not visibly seem to be especially respected or treated with ceremony. The village chief is far more prominent. But just as the village chief shows his greatness by carrying no weapons and wearing no insignia of rank (that he leaves for his greater glory to his followers), so the witch-doctor enhances his power and influence by his personal obscurity and outward insignificance. His power rests not on his personality, but on his knowledge of the charms

proper for any and every occasion, private or public. He does not seem to inspire personal awe, but to be the hired intermediary between the tribe or individual and the spirits. Most of those across whom I have come have been simple, good-natured men of no particular intelligence. They themselves apparently believe without question or doubt in the efficacy of their charms, in the formulæ and technique that they have inherited and been taught to use.

There will be found in each district a head witch-doctor, the "high priest" in pidgin English. He will have living with him a few boys who are being trained by him to become witch-doctors. They are taught by him the secrets of the profession and its usages. Otherwise they live the ordinary village life. In each village will be the village witch-doctor in charge of the skull house, and ministering to the village as priest and doctor, if one can so dignify his work. He will lead the prayers before going out to fish or fight, or plant or harvest the crop, bless the canoes that go out porpoise-hunting, visit the sick, and search out those who are practising private witchcraft and have caused, or are seeking to cause, the death of some neighbour. After a death the witch-doctor is called in to find out who has caused it. He comes to the village, throws himself into a state of trance, and when coming out of it calls out in a strange voice—the spirit's voice, it is supposed to be—revealing the name of some suspected person. There are other methods of procedure less dramatic, such as private consultation with the witch-doctor, but this just described is a common one if the death

is important or startling in any way. But this is not conclusive.

The witch-doctor goes away, but the search goes on. The suspected man vigorously denies, if the accusation reaches him, any private "poisoning," as they call it in pidgin English. It may not be he, then, but some one else of his tribe or village. A cloud of suspicion rests on the place. One day a party arrives in the village about sunset, headed by a witch-doctor and witnesses. "We have come to put the light against this place" is their announcement. They sit up in the men's sleeping hut and watch. Towards dawn the witch-doctor will spring up, walk up to some individual who is asleep, or pretending to be so, lift his eyelid, and proclaim that he sees the light in his eye, and calls the witnesses to see it. One witness, telling me of such a night of watching, told me how he had been watching all night till his eyes seemed to be coming out of his head. "Then I was called to see the light," he said. "I did not see anything, but others did." They would naturally, most of them, be in a state to see anything they were told to see, and probably the witch-doctor himself was in a state of self-deception induced by prolonged expectation. However that may be, it is conclusive to their minds.

The man is marked down as guilty. His own tribe will not give him up, but they will be passive and accept his killing when, perhaps months afterwards, after elaborate preparations, a party march in to kill him. The unfortunate man has perhaps for months never left the shelter of his village,

sleeping by day and watching by night. He knows that if he goes outside there will be watchers ready to catch him, and hopes that his own village will protect him and forbid a party coming in. He is more or less shunned and ostracized, though not publicly outcast. No one wants his company, though they do not refuse it if he forces it upon them. If a canoe party, for example, is going out it will be difficult to get together if he says he means to go, and so he will drop out of tribal life and live very much alone. Such a man would take the first opportunity to recruit for labour on a plantation. Queensland and Fiji sugar plantations were his refuge till the labour traffic there came to an end. That may defer his fate, but, even if it is many years before he returns, he will still be a suspect. Any death after his return will be very likely assumed to be due to his resuming witchcraft practices, and his life will at last some day be taken.

No doubt there are men who practise secret witchcraft, using death charms and so forth. Such men are feared and hated. The power thus given them and the enjoyment of the sense of it makes them face the danger, and they may live a long time feared and threatened, and rather exulting in it. A sick man will get a message : " So-and-so has bewitched you ; you will die in three days." And sure enough he will die of sheer fright within the three days. Even after the real or supposed practiser of these evils has been killed his work may continue for a time. Take, for example, a case I remember. A young married woman saw in a dream a man who had been killed



ISLET SHRINES.

These are Bugolu sacred places, connected with spirit worship. The projecting cap of the lower shrine is a local design; for the shape of the shrine is peculiar.

for witchcraft. She and her people, her husband and tribe took it as a warning of death. She lay moaning in a dark corner of her hut, her relations round her, her husband fondling her, he and others in tears. She was dying of fright. The only thing to do was to get her out of the hut into the open air. There in the sunlight and open space she began slowly to recover and her terrors subsided. She was a Christian, and her faith began to revive and give her hope. If she had been heathen I am afraid there would have been no chance for her. Anything belonging to an individual that the practitioner of witchcraft can get hold of may be material for enchantment. A scrap of his clothing, a crumb of his food, a bit of his finger-nail, anything, however small, will do. Hence the minute care that a party visiting a village take not to leave a crumb or a scrap behind them. It might be picked up, and by enchantment used to work them harm, cause disaster, accident, sickness, death, or any other calamity.

Every native, too, carries about with him wrapped up in leaves in his bag a little packet of charms. These little packets may contain bits of anything—bone, leaf, stone, wood. The charms are innumerable and for every conceivable purpose. This *vale* is helpful in love, and will win you the affection of the one you desire. Another will make you invisible in fight, another give you courage, another is good for money-making ; this one averts failure in fishing ; that one brings success in voyaging ; every one possesses and treasures some of these charms. They gradually lose their power, though some of great

mana are long lived and their repute is carried on from generation to generation. Such a charm was being carried about the bush in Guadalcanar a few years ago ; it was ancient and of great reputation for dealing death. Wherever the party of bush-rangers who carried it was reported to be there was great terror all round, lest the charm should be used in the villages round about. Sometimes a man will in anger fling away his charms as useless to avert trouble or bring success. If the spirits connected with the charm can do no better than they are doing for him they may be safely spurned. The belief in their charms is very strong, and lasts even to a second or third generation of professed and more enlightened people who have given up their use. But they become little more than mascots. The feeling about them is comparable to our feelings about things or objects lucky or unlucky : our dislike of the number 13, for example, or nervousness if a glass is smashed or salt spilt, or objection to starting anything of importance on a Friday, or scores of other half-superstitions that survive through generations of civilization and scientific research.

One method of warfare often practised and not a little feared is to throw death charms into a hostile village. The enemy creep up by night near enough to throw them into the village. The feelings of the said village are most unpleasant on finding such charms lying about in the morning. In private witchcraft a rough, little image may serve to represent the victim and be used to bring death or pain, according to the practitioner's handling of it. Any-

thing may contain *mana*, supernatural power, but in varying intensity, *mana*, prestige or influence, is also attributed to men, and the man who has *mana* is readily obeyed and followed. Favourite *mana* objects are queer-shaped pieces of stones—the more peculiar or rare the shape the greater the *mana* is likely to be. Certain spots, if there is anything striking or peculiar in their appearance, are likely to be the abode of spirits, and are avoided. It may be even death to set foot on them, and the further away the passing canoe keeps the better for its crew and the less the fear of disaster. A place where some tragedy has happened is abandoned and becomes spirit-haunted, and is left unapproached for generations. Magical power is local. A sick man's great wish, if he be seriously ill, is to be moved elsewhere. The spirits that are tormenting him may not have power a few miles away, and he may recover. But, native like, the move is generally put off till the case is hopeless.

An angry or sulky chief who has a quarrel with his people or does not want to sanction something they wish him to do, or agree to their doing, will silently betake himself elsewhere till the tribe submit and beg him to come back. For with him is in some way loosely connected the *mana* of the tribe, and it will not be well with them if he is absent and sulky. Silence, by the way, does not give consent in the Solomons. To say "No" directly to one's own people is a great offence, and so refuge is taken in silence when anyone does not wish to say "Yes." This silence is a refusal, but not an act of actual hostility. Two examples, and such things are daily

occurring, will show how this belief in death by magic disturbs the native life and destroys peace. In a "school" village a woman died in childbirth. The child lived. The husband accepted sorrowfully the blow. The woman's father, an old *mwane ramo*, fighting man, of some local repute, took it in the old way. After the funeral, to which he sullenly assented, he stole out at night and pierced the grave and the body with a long spear. The villagers, seeing the spear thus stuck in the grave, knew that it was a great oath of vengeance for his daughter's death, and that the blame was laid on them, and they went in fear and trembling. The old man went off to hire avengers, but, for he was very poor and his little day of power over, failed to find any. Slowly the fear died out. But it might revive at any time. The old man's death, however, soon after ended the affair, for there was no one else to take it up.

One Ramfola, a chief, a devoted father, though a cruel and cunning enemy, one day brought to a "school" village two small children of his, both in the last stages of dysentery. When his spirits had failed he thought the new religion might be able to help, or, anyway, the white man's medicine prove effective. Both children died, and the village quaked with fear. Great was their relief when Ramfola left one of his dead children behind for them to bury and took the other away. It was a sign that he did not accuse them. The body he took away he buried near his village, and stuck a spear through grave and body. So every tribe round was kept on tenterhooks,

wondering where the guilty party responsible for his children's death would be found. They knew Ramfola's love for his children, and of many past savage deeds of vengeance he had done. For he had taken many vengeancees in a stormy life, and there were many more untaken, but ever being plotted.

The belief in magic is instinctive. It cannot be reasoned against. "We know, but the white man doesn't," is an attitude that makes argument or reasoning useless. Killing people accused of witchcraft is forbidden by the Government, and is dealt with as murder, and so it is hoped to destroy the custom. Unfortunately the really guilty people are not the actual killers, but those who send them and pay them to go. They, the actual killers, are generally lads sent by the chief or followers of some professional killer, and their moral guilt is not really very great. They believe that they have removed a murderer, and have more enterprise and courage than the others, who would like to do as they, but are afraid. Where excuse can be found for them their death sentence is sometimes remitted—they do a term of imprisonment; then perhaps, if well behaved, are enrolled in the police, and can find a decent outlet for their energies and warlike proclivities. The man who does practise witchcraft with intent to kill or hurt, for money or for private purposes, may be arrested, and, if proved guilty of such practices, be imprisoned for a long, even life, sentence if advisable. Probably it is a puzzle to the native mind why the man who rightly killed the murderer by witchcraft should be hung, but the

guilty practiser of the black art, who has killed perhaps many by magic, is only imprisoned. However, it makes greatly for the happiness of an island when these killings are sternly put down, and one hopes for the day when the natives will see how they benefit by the enforced peace, even if they do not understand British justice. The Englishman is so curious he always wants to know who did this ; whereas the native is content to punish the tribe concerned, and cares little about the particular individual.

The private magician is, however, an exception. He is "wanted" as an individual. Magical beliefs among primitive people are not wholly evil. The regular witch-doctor, for example, does know and uses certain useful remedies sometimes. His enchantments do compose those possessed by evil spirits, and faith, even its crudest and most grotesque form, does sometimes heal and relieve mind or body, or both. Then, too, a charm, or *tapu* mark, set on a tree or private property is a protection. Tribal life without it would be a state of total chaos. The fate of primitive folk who had no fear of spirits to control their desires would be speedy extinction. Native morality is one of fear, but that is better than no morality at all. The belief, too, in the spirits of the dead, even of little children, near them to help, is better than blank despair and an outlet for natural affection. To jeer at it all is cruel and foolish, and not done by decent white men who think. It raises them to a platform above the animal level, for animals, I suppose, have no fear of evil spirits—from which they can be lifted to something higher

and happier. The worst natives are those who learn to despise and defy their old beliefs, and have nothing left to restrain or lift them up, but give full rein as far as they dare to their worst impulses.

C H A P T E R S E V E N T E E N

Labour

FROM the middle of last century the Solomon Islander has been in demand as a workman on white men's plantations. Up to 1870 the getting of labour was done without scruple or mercy, by force or by fraud, through schooners who filled up their space as best they could, by any method. These schooners were known as "thiefships"; their own name for their trade was "black-birding." Bishop Patteson's murder in 1871 on Nukapu, an act of reprisal for five men kidnapped from that little island, forced the evil into daylight, and the traffic was regulated and brought under Government control and inspection. Each schooner had to be licensed, and carried a Government inspector. Natives recruited in large numbers, and often stayed on for many years. The recruiter who landed on the beach had a risky time, for the white man was held responsible for those who returned not, and his life sought in reprisal. By regulation two boats, armed, the second to cover the first, backed on to the beach from the schooner, so that they could quickly get out and return. The recruiter landed, never going far from the boat, and did his bargaining as quickly as might be. With him was a native recruiter, a pidgin English talker who knew the district and its people. Even with all

these precautions a recruiter was sometimes killed on the beach, and often attempts that failed were made. Each schooner had a trade room. This was a great attraction, and the natives would crowd on board to buy.

Now and again a small schooner that went round trading would be cut out, the two white men, the usual number on a schooner, killed, and the vessel looted and burnt. Woe betide the schooner that went ashore in bad weather or through an accident ! She was quickly seized and sacked. The tribes round who flocked to the looting went about for a while in much gorgeous attire. The timbers of the vessel would be found serving very useful or ornamental purposes, and could be seen in many villages ; the deck planks were especially welcome. The captain and mate of such schooners were fortunate indeed if they succeeded in escaping in a boat to some friendly place. Jack London, in one of his South Sea Island books, tells of how the schooner he was on went ashore on Mala. Happily for him it was close to a " school " village, and its folk got down first and stood by the vessel till she was got off safely after two days. The bush men, flocking down to the anticipated spoil, were thwarted, and had to return empty-handed. Others were less fortunate.

In 1904 this labour traffic came to an end. Not only was all recruiting stopped, but all who had been less than twenty years in Queensland were returned home. The return of a man from Queensland used to be an entertaining and, at times, a very lively time. The schooner had been sighted from

the hill villages, and the tribes flocked down, all armed, to receive any member whose return they expected. The coast folk were already there. The man's precious box was a main object of attention. If he was a bush man, and there were none or few of his own people to meet him, his box became the prey of the coast people, and he was lucky if he was allowed to go to his village unharmed. He himself landed in all his finery, solar topee helmet, white drill suit, gayest of ties, patent leather boots, gaudiest of socks, umbrella, and, in his blanket or the false bottom of his box, perhaps a rifle. If so, he was very welcome indeed. In a few hours all this finery and all the contents of his box would be distributed among his relations and tribe, or seized by his enemies, and he would happily return to the loin cloth (or less), waiting for his share when the next man returned.

Sometimes the box would be opened and the contents distributed on the beach. There were funny and furiously noisy scenes, sometimes killings, before the beach was left. But generally the various parties would disperse to their villages in triumph with man *and* his box, the latter carried by eager hands. Many of these men returned straight to the savage state, but with their old tribal obedience shaken and more self-assertive than before. But many, who had been with good masters and come under Christian influence and been to evening schools, would form a little band of friends and live together extratribally, making a new "school" village on land belonging to some of them. Their own tribes always tried to get them back. Often

the new village would be attacked—many times its head was killed ; but after a few years, finding that their determination could not be shaken, they were accepted, and allowed to live in peace. Such places were nuclei round which quite large villages would grow within a few years.

The return of all the “labour” in 1904 accelerated this process. One little scene, typical of many, may serve as a sample of the kind of thing that often happened. One, Simon Omi, after many years in Queensland, returns with a well-filled box. He has gone in for tools, and has no rifle, but wants to settle at a “school” village close to his own home. The school village comes down to welcome him, also his tribal chief. The tribal chief demands his return to his village. Simon says he is going to the “school” one when he has landed. Each side seizes his box, and a violent tug-of-war follows. Simon is forgotten *pro tem.* as they strive for his box. By the white man’s persuasion the box is at last allowed to be carried up the hill to the “school” village, followed by the chief. And then, by tactful presents and promises, Simon and a nearly empty box are allowed to remain.

Such a return seems a poor reward for many years of labour in a foreign land. But the tie of their own home is very strong, and the returning in important glory a very great joy. The return in 1904 had to be very carefully managed, and was, on the whole, very successful. It was hardest on those who had families born in Queensland or Fiji. These children had been to the State schools, worn clothes, and eaten food like their white companions ; some did

not know the language of their parents' tribe. To them it was an evil day when they were returned as bush folk to a bush village. They did not, as a rule, live long, but died early. Fever weakened them, and any illness laid strong hold on them. Their best chance was to go to a "school" village, where they would find conditions somewhat more like those they had been accustomed to.

Now all "labour" is on Solomon Island plantations. There coconut plantations recruit men and a few married women for two-year terms. Those who "sign on" for work are inspected at the Government station before being allowed to be taken to the plantation. They get five shillings a week pay, and the Government inspector goes round to see that the regulations as to food and housing are being obeyed. The cost to the plantation of each recruit is twenty pounds, of which ten goes to the Government and ten to the recruiting schooner. Out of this a valuable present is made, given on the beach at the time of recruiting to the man's people. It generally takes the form of a case of tobacco, and is a large slice out of the ten pounds available. Efforts are being made to abolish the present-on-the-beach system and to lower the recruiting fee. The labourer's conditions physically are not bad. His food is plentiful, and housing probably quite as good as in his own village and more sanitary. At the end of his term he receives in cash a minimum of nine pounds. The other three he may have had in advance, but not more than that. The work is not, except in exceptional cases, very arduous. The hours are long and, to him, tedious, but he is sure

of two hours clear in the middle of the day and an hour before sunset. So they cannot exceed nine hours' work at the most, and probably average nearly eight. But the life is not a natural or wholesome one ; it breaks off his native life when he ought to be settling down and marrying ; it does not teach him to be industrious, for he has enough of work, he thinks, when his term of service is over.

Of course, it very much depends on the kind of master he gets. The man who is both just and kindly, strict and liberal, will get a good servant, and both will profit by their association. But if it is otherwise the results will be otherwise. The demand for labour is in excess of the supply to develop their coconut plantations, the bulk of which are owned by large companies. Efforts have been made to get permission for imported labour, Javanese or Chinese. That would certainly do the native no good turn. If only the native could be taught to make his own *copra* out of his own coconuts, properly grown and tended, in his own village, that would be far better for him. But it would be a slow and costly process, not practicable from a mercantile point of view. He does to a certain extent make and sell his own *copra*, but in a spasmodic and quite unorganized sort of way. Some plantations employ local day labour at 9½d. a day to supplement the indentured labour. This suits the native living near a plantation, as he is free to work a bit, and then take a spell off to spend his money, and then work for a bit again. But from the employer's point of view it is uncertain, and less work is done ; the " boy " has to be more humoured, or he will take himself off.

Other natives earn money by meeting the steamers from Sydney, or going to Sydney, at Tulagi, the main port, and doing dock labour. This is popular work. The pay is two shillings a day, and the spell of work is short, and the store at hand. The steamer is about a fortnight in the group, and takes "boys" on for that period.

Occasionally trouble breaks out on plantations, for there are bad employers, rough and harsh, and there are bad employees, lazy and impertinent. "Boys" have been killed by ill-treatment from white men; but white men have been killed by "boys" for loot in revenge. But it is very rare, and getting, happily, rarer. One often used to hear and come across cases of boats or canoes being stolen, packed with run-aways, who first looted the plantation store, and perhaps killed the white men, and made a dash for Mala; the bulk of labour came from there. If they got across to their island and away into the bush they were very hard to catch. But such cases have practically come to an end. On a well-managed plantation such a thing is very unlikely to happen, and it would not be so difficult to get hold of run-aways as it was a few years ago. From Saturday afternoon to Monday morning their time is their own. They "walk-about," going to neighbouring villages, visiting stores, or sit around, smoking and interminably yarning. Their rations are tea and biscuits, rice, native vegetable food, yams, etc, and meat twice a week; also three sticks—about five ounces—of trade tobacco. A recruit, unless he is for house-work only, must be sixteen years of age; he has to pass medical inspection before going to

his employer. The house "boy" can be engaged as young as fourteen. They are generally bright, smart youngsters, who enjoy their job and feel very important. A good house "boy" is a treasure to master or mistress, and a great subject for conversation. Their chief failing is inability to discern the difference between a clean and a dirty cloth. Anything that will wipe, even a corner of their own clothing, is surely good enough. "Missus" is apt to make a great fuss about such trifles; "master" often looks the other way and hopes for the best. Married people who recruit are not very numerous. They have, of course, their own quarters, and the woman, if not encumbered with baby or small child, goes out to work with her husband. An old hand who stays on for second or third terms gets higher pay. The "boss-boy" is an important person. The successful "boss" is worth a lot; he is a go-between 'twixt white man and "boy," takes charge of the plantation, tools, etc., and, if well chosen, is well obeyed. On a small plantation he may be left in charge for days while the master is away, recruiting or meeting the steamer. The "boss-boy" knows his gang, their ways and grievances, etc.; he is one of themselves, whom they readily follow.

Nowadays practically every able-bodied boy over sixteen takes his turn at plantation work. From each village a number of these boys will be doing indenture or casual labour. They go in little parties, return for a spell at home, and then take another turn. In this way they earn enough money to pay the poll tax, one pound per annum (less in some islands),

that is levied on all males between sixteen and sixty. It is levied on each individual, but is really a tribal affair. This poll tax brings in much revenue and stimulates plantation labour ; but whether that justifies its imposition is quite another question. It was said at first it would be of great service to the natives, providing money for great increase of medical service. But the fulfilment of this hope seems still far off. The native pays up wonderfully well, and a village likes to provide its full quota. It is one of the Government's ways that must be accepted. *In their eyes* it is natural for the strong to gather from the weak, and it is not much resented. But that ought hardly to satisfy the conscience of the strong. Of course the argument is urged that the native receives great benefit from the Government in the enforcement of law and administration of justice and so forth, and should bear his share of the expense. But then the question arises as to the fairness of charging for enforced benefits till they are known to be benefits and accepted as such.

The whole labour question is full of difficulties. To avoid its evils it should be entirely voluntary, and not directly or indirectly enforced. Law and order and justice are tremendous boons. A quiet island is happier than a wild one. But plantation life does the native no good. He earns money that he does not need, to buy goods that he is better without, and does not learn to like work, though he likes, of course, getting and spending money. He would be much better learning to do more work in his own village under his village chief. But that would be a slow and expensive process. Plantation life



TWO CHUMS.

Seamen of Feri-si-boia, one of the artificial islands off Mala. The man on the right clings conservatively to nose ring and half-moon neck ornament, and many bracelets. Both wear the tight red grass armlet, put on young and seldom removed.

breaks into the old tribal system and loosens its restraints. The individual becomes increasingly independent and able to defy his tribe. The chief is no longer the richest man in the tribe, or disposer of its goods, but poorer than the youth who earns money. The chief is often made village policeman, but that puts him in a very difficult position, and is a kind of authority that he often shirks and tries to avoid. In place of the old tribal authority he has to invoke the Government's from without. That is very nice if the offender is one of another tribe, but if he is of the chief's own tribe it is quite another story.

The whole problem is at a very difficult stage, and needs very sympathetic as well as firm handling—there are so many different interests involved. But, after all, the natives' interests should be the first concern. That means a lot of patience and putting up for a time with less efficiency and slower development in some ways, but it is the true path to real progress.

Another kind of labour in the Solomons is road-making. The old tracks round the coast first, and now on some islands from village to village, are being widened and made into roads. This is done by setting the villagers to make and keep the roads. Each village has a certain distance to keep up after clearing, generally half-way to the nearest village on each side. The Government provide the necessary tools, and the village the work. So far the roads are just widened tracks, kept clear, capable of being ridden along, but not possible for motor traffic. The only wheeled traffic on the islands is that of bullock

carts on plantations. These roads, if they are increased inland and open up the bush and uncover its villages, will be very useful and help to increase intercourse, and make police work easier and more effective ; and it is hoped that the natives will come to recognize this, and feel that the obligation laid on them is fair and for their benefit, as well as for the white man's. But it is not easy for them to see this at first. At present just clearing and keeping clear a wide track is not hard labour, nor are many days' work necessary. Bridge-making across the numerous streams is not yet. There are only the rough native bridges where the streams are deep and narrow and capable of being spanned by the felling of a tree.

Yet another form of native labour is the employment of native police. A good many of these are ex-prisoners. The drilling and disciplining of these men does them enormous good physically. The weedy, slouching youth leaves the force after his term of service a stout, well-set-up fellow. As a rule they are amusingly self-important, and want a strong hand over them to keep them from misusing their authority by arbitrary commands or as a means of extortion. When their term is over and they return to their village they soon lose their acquired smartness. The police service is a fine outlet for an active, intelligent boy's energies at a time when, in his village, he is apt to be running about making himself a general nuisance. Such lads in some cases get themselves into trouble, into gaol, and then into the police, if they have behaved well ; others recruit direct from the villages.

To summarize these discursive remarks on native labour : there seem to emerge from it all certain principles. The first one is that native labour should be for the benefit of the native first. The white man who comes to his country and uses him should recognize this. Plantation indentured labour is, on the whole, not good for the native. Local labour is more natural and more wholesome. The difficulty about local labour, of course, is its uncertainty ; the boys come and go at their whim. But a good master can generally find a supply fairly constantly. All work in the village by the villagers, in their gardens or in the village, should be encouraged, and, as far as possible, put under the chief's authority. This authority should be, as far as possible, on the old tribal lines, and the chief more than just the voice of the Government. Taxation and forced labour should be so managed as to be a visible benefit to the native from his point of view, bringing him medical help, and making the communication to the coast easier. Then perhaps it can be justified, and will not be unwelcome, and will do good.

Industrial schools should be encouraged, where the native will learn work that will interest him, and will employ him in after years. Carpentry is a most useful thing for him to learn. There are native crafts that might be revived and taught, new work with native materials, such as bamboo, could be learned there, and old arts revived. The native returned from a plantation never sets to work to improve the growing and planting of his own coconut trees, though he must see the difference in production of nuts per tree. He might be encouraged

to do this, but it is quicker and cheaper to get him away on to a plantation. Any demand for imported labour from Java, for example, should, for the native's sake, be refused.

If these principles were followed out it would cost more money, but in the end, by benefiting the natives, benefit the white man who employs them.

C H A P T E R E I G H T E E N

Food

ISLANDS in warm, tropical seas with abundant rainfall and a hot sun are naturally fertile. The soil is mainly volcanic, and grows abundantly a thick bush. The bush is gloomy and dull green, but brightened by plenty of colour. Many flowers which would be treasures in English hot-houses grow, lavish in amount and gorgeous in colour. Orchids hang from the trees ; cannas and many varieties of hibiscus are everywhere ; bougainvilleas and flowering shrubs and trees are very common. The white man has tried his hand at adding to these the flowers he knows and loves at home, and you may find his garden full with native flowers trimmed and kept in order ; and roses, for example, added. But not many of these experiments succeed.

As with food, so with flowers ; it is wisest to make the best of the abundant native products. " Don't sigh for potatoes ; eat yams," might be suggested as a useful slogan for the nostalgic white man and his wife. " Don't languish over the lack of violets ; plant a hibiscus hedge," would be a good motto, or " Don't organize oddities ; occupy your land with orchids." Beware of too much clearing ! The Englishman loves a wide, open space, lawns and trim paths, but these are not natural, and the glaring heat

of the open space bids him repent of over-clearing and not keeping plenty of trees to shade his garden. But small lawns, well kept, are a great beauty and eye feast. Grass is abundant. It was not always so, till the white man's goods were sent him packed in straw, and the seeds scattered from the unpacked cases took root and began to spread everywhere. The native stick could no longer keep the gardens clear, but he had to take to the hoe. This grass now enables cattle to be kept on the plantations under the coconut trees. Native grass was scarce, coarse, and a sign of bad land when the bush would not grow, and useless for cattle. The bush abounds with edible things known to the natives. There is so much that widows who had to swear at their husbands' deaths never again to taste cooked food, can still manage to exist, living on fruits, nuts, and a variety of edible plants which can be eaten raw. It cannot be a pleasant existence, but it is a possible one. In some places widows live thus till their death, under a *tapu* against any cooked food.

The only native quadruped in the islands is the rat. To these have been added swarms of dogs—kept in the villages as well as wild in the bush—cats, and pigs. Many plantations now run herds of cattle and have a few horses for plantation use. Pig-hunting with dogs is a native sport. The bush pig is a great nuisance and an inveterate breaker of fences and plunderer of gardens. Native custom rules fairly that the owner of the pig must repair the broken fence of his neighbour's garden, or let the pig be killed. If a garden has been spoiled the pig is taken in exchange for the food lost. If not,

the pig belongs to the owner after it is killed. Precious as pigs are, and prominent in native life and affairs, they are amusingly vague sometimes about their property. I wanted to buy a pig once of a certain size, and was told of one. The owner was willing to sell. The pig was to be fetched, but could not be found. Three days were devoted to hunting for him, as he did not turn up at feeding time. Then at last it came out that the owner had not seen the pig for four years, but that the size, etc., were a guess at what the animal would be when and if found. He was supposed to be somewhere in the bush, and might turn up for his evening meal at the man's hut any day.

Wild pigs without owners may be killed by anyone. Villages and huts used to be full of these animals, and the piglet was carried about like a baby. But by Government regulations now they must be kept out of the villages by fences, so they return no longer to the hut to eat and sleep with their owners. Goats have been tried, but that is now practically given up. They are troublesome to keep, requiring much fencing or constant herding, and are very attractive to crocodiles, and on plantations now there is abundant cow's milk available. Sheep do not do. Their wool is too heavy, and their feet do not stand the damp climate and soil. There are no monkeys. There may have been some possibly once, for in some islands tales are current of little men with tails, up on the mountains. So flesh food is not very varied. There is little except the pig to feed on. Bush men are said to eat rats and dogs at times. The natives add to these occasionally pigeons. These are

very abundant (so is the *bina*, its flesh is like that of a very large, coarse pigeon, and the bird itself is mainly an enormous bill with a small body and wings attached), as are flying foxes (a kind of bat and a great fruit-devourer), opossums, parrots, and cockatoos. The two latter are very abundant, but only very rarely eaten. They are often taken as young "squawkers" from the nest, and become tame about a village for a time, till the call of the bush draws them back to their natural life. The sea provides abundant food and sport. Sharks are speared, if they come close enough to the shore, and eaten.

Porpoise-hunting is a great business and the flesh strong and pungent, but it is popular in the bush, though the teeth are the hunter's main object. Turtle are often caught, and there is abundant variety of fish of all sorts, providing a daily harvest for the nets.

So the Solomon Islander need never starve or lack variety of food. Even if drought or rain, as sometimes happens, destroys wholesale his gardens, and he has to face hungry days, he can still find something to sustain life until better days come. He is getting nowadays too independent of wholesome garden work, and prefers to earn money and buy food, rice, and tinned meat. He could grow in good seasons ample for himself and have a surplus to sell to plantations, but he does not do so as a rule. Often when his yam harvest is just gathered you can buy food from him that he ought to be keeping for his own needs, and the money has to be spent later on perhaps in rice, far less wholesome for him than his own vegetable foods. The said rice, by the way, he likes to



FISHING.

Shooting fish with bow and arrow is a favourite sport. The fine pose shows the native agility and grace. The shooting to be successful needs a quick hand and eye.

eat half cooked in a very scanty amount of water. Properly cooked rice he regards as too soft for solid food. Rice is very handy, useful when gardens fail, but not his convenient food nor congenial to him or his constitution, for he is by nature a root-eater.

Another item of food is sugar cane, which grows freely. They do not extract the sugar, but simply cut and chew the cane. They must absorb an unwholesome amount of fibre by this method. Of Indian corn they nowadays grow a little, and are fond of it. Much native food that once was cooked, and well cooked, in the native oven is now more easily boiled, and often only half boiled. Here again his work is eased, but to no real profit. Empty kerosene tins used as boilers abound in every village, replacing the native oven and the good cooking on hot stones packed with leaves. The opening of these ovens at sunset for the evening meal used to be a great feature of native life, but it is getting rarer, as they find it so much easier to boil water over a few sticks and drop their food into it. Labour-saving may be a sign of civilization, but it does not as yet improve primitive, unprepared races. The time he saves he does not and cannot employ in higher pursuits. He is not incapable of higher culture, but needs time to grow into it. It is very easy to drop the old ways ; it is far harder to assimilate the new. Instead of progress there is ennui and idleness.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

The Government

THE British Solomon Islands are a British Protectorate some thirty years of age and grown out of its infancy days. The ex-German Solomon Islands are an Australian mandate, and yet in its vigorous infancy. The British Protectorate is under the Colonial Office ; at the head of the administration is the High Commissioner for the Western Pacific, who lives in Fiji ; under him is the Resident Commissioner for the Solomon Islands, with a residence on Tulagi, an islet, part of Florida, in the centre of the group ; under him are District Officers resident on the various islands which are their respective districts. On Tulagi, the Government centre, are various offices—Customs, Land, Post Office, Labour, Police, etc., with their respective heads and staffs ; also a gaol for natives, and a hospital with a resident doctor and two nurses, with wards for white people and a native department. There is a body of armed native constabulary on Tulagi, and with the District Officers. Native police are in various villages ; often the chief of a village is chosen for this office. All the Governmental work has grown and developed rapidly in recent years, and the native daily life and domestic affairs are coming daily more and more under supervision and administration. Mr Woodford, the first Resident

Commissioner, began the work with a house in Tulagi to live in, a small schooner to travel about and make investigations, and the occasional visit of a man-of-war to enforce his authority, and a handful of native police, and the vague prestige of the white man to rely on. The Government stands for primarily the protection and civilizing of the natives, and next the commercial development of the islands. It stands between the white men and the native, regulating their relations and intercourse in its every phase and complication. The smallest local village scandal may be its business to deal with, the future of the Solomon Islands in the world is its ultimate concern. How to develop the islands and make them profitable for the white man, and at the same time protect and uplift the native, is no easy problem.

If, as one Resident Commissioner remarked, he could sit under a coconut tree and administer personal justice without formalities, it would be comparatively easy, but all has to be done under the formalities of English law, which the natives cannot fully understand or appreciate. The wide gap between reasonable assumption and legal proof is a mystery to him. Fiji, too, to which much has to be referred for sanction, is a long way off, and there is no regular direct communication, but a slow *via* Sydney route for official papers to travel to and fro by. So there are delays and difficulties. Some are in favour of breaking the connection with Fiji altogether. They would make the British Solomons a Crown Colony directly under the Colonial Office. A chartered company to administer the islands was talked

of and planned for, some years ago, but the scheme came to nothing. To administer the Solomons needs revenue. This revenue should show a surplus over expenditure. The main sources of revenue are Custom duties, which are about 12 per cent. on imports, export duties, and taxation of white men—indirect, by license to trade—and rent of plantation (from 3d. an acre on newly acquired land up to higher sums on fully developed plantations).

Then there is to be added the increasingly important item of native taxation. There is an annual head tax of £1 (in some islands, 10s.) on all males between the ages of sixteen and sixty. There is an annual dog tax of 5s. per dog, and there is work for which villages are responsible, or road-making. So the native pays his full share, rather wondering why it began, what it is for, and when it will end. But, on the whole, *more suo*, he submits cheerfully to authority and pays up surprisingly well. I have not found him quite rising as yet to the height of his New Guinea brother, who is said to receive the tax-gathering official with cheers, proud of being important enough to pay *takus*, and receive the little metal receipts to hang round his neck. The Solomon Islander likes wearing his similar disc; but the dog tax, at any rate, he is not quite happy over. Dogs he must have for his pig-hunting, and he is allowed two for a village, but that is not enough. There are far too many dogs certainly, but 5s. per dog does seem a lot to pay. The head tax is earned by the boys who work on the plantations, and is valuable to the Government for the revenue it provides, and to the trade for the stimulus it gives to labour. But the

real question is whether the white man is morally justified in imposing it. The only justification is its use for the benefit of the natives in the way of the medical help he so badly needs, or other benefits. He can hardly be expected to enjoy paying his quota towards the expenses of a Government imposed upon him, and of a system of law and order brought to him from without—such as he sees in the police system. His most direct contact with the Government is when a Government officer visits his village on his rounds. The difficulty is that such visits must be nearly always disciplinary; the D.O. has not time to give to complimentary and friendly visits, except on rare occasions.

Then, too, most of the business has to be done through a pidgin English-speaking native interpreter, who cannot always, and does not always, say exactly what he was intended to say. His interpretation of his master's words is inevitably distorted by misunderstanding, self-importance, or fear of offending, so the D.O.'s task is not an easy one, even for the D.O. most set on promoting the natives' welfare as his main job. The native as a witness or on trial is at his worst, and the truth is very, very hard to extract from the complication of unproved assertions and denials, of charges and counter-charges that confuse each case with which he has to deal. The patience of Job clothed in the hide of a rhinoceros is inadequate to deal rightly with some of the cases with which he has to do. To hold the balance evenly between native and trader, Government and native, native and native, Government and trader, missionary and native, he must

displease them all at times, and this in a tropical, malarial climate, when nerves are tingling, and a short, sharp settlement by guess work is very tempting.

The German system of crushing all level with an iron-clad heel has quick results ; a sentimental leniency has its temptations for some ; the mean between the extremes is the English ideal.

How to get revenue without over-taxation of white or brown inhabitants and to deal fairly with both is a problem not very easy to solve. How to encourage the trade and development of the islands with generous, fair treatment of the natives is another problem. The Government offers the native law and order. It forbids him to fight, but offers him a court of law ; it forbids private vengeance for wrongs real or assumed, but gives him the right to have his alleged wrongs inquired into and settled justly. It bids him keep his house and village clean, and to make roads ; and offers him (on all too limited a scale as yet) free medical treatment and supervision. As far as possible it recognizes native customs, and tries to support the waning power of the chiefs.

So day by day it enters more and more into native life and alters its outlook. Adjustment to, and understanding of, the new state of things is a slow process. The native cannot be hurried, nor can he digest large doses of civilization. The highest type of white man is necessary. He can understand and respect where the little man shows ignorance or contempt, and is, in turn, understood and respected. The British Solomons are a British Protectorate, and to protect the native is the Government's primary

work. Up north, Australia holds a mandate over the ex-German Solomons, and has vigorously set to work with a whole-hearted zeal for native welfare. It will be very interesting to watch the results of this work and its developments, and its efforts to keep a strong, native race progressing and growing in numbers and stamina. Their medical work has been begun on very vigorous lines, supported by large money grants.

C H A P T E R T W E N T Y

The Solomon Islander and his Money

PRIMITIVE man naturally exchanges by barter. Fish and yams, for example, are brought every few days to a meeting-place on market days and exchanged. After four or five "sleepings," to use their phrase, they meet again as arranged at the market at the same or some other centre. But even primitive man cannot do without money. He may buy a wife, for example, for three pigs, but has to add to that native monies as well. These at first were no doubt covetable personal ornaments, chiefly in shell work. Then came the counting of items if their ornaments were detachable and could be counted. About one thousand porpoise teeth, for example, fastened by the roots into a band makes a collar. These could be counted and strung into hundreds, tens, fives, or kept loose and used for cash. Their value in English money is about ten to the shilling. Smaller fish teeth are also used, of less value, and also dogs' teeth, worth in Gela sixpence, elsewhere of no particular value. Human teeth, too, are strung into necklaces, but not of a fixed value per tooth. Another form of cash is shell money. These are tiny discs of shell, pierced in the centre and strung together. The smallest length is from the thumb to the first finger when stretched apart, next from the



MEN OF UURU, N. MALA.

The man on the right has a fine pair of tortoise shell ear-rings, clipped into the pierced lobe of the ears. The shell "spur" in the centre of the nose is worn by Mala sea-folk. The two men on the left are wearing the shell half-moon collar.

tip of the thumb to the wrist, elbow, shoulder ; then tip of middle finger to centre of breast ; and last of all from finger-tip to finger-tip with arms outstretched. This last is roughly a fathom, two yards. Ten of these fathom strings tied together make a *taefilia*, used for big transactions, worth about five pounds. These *taefilias* are generally the property of, or in the custody of, the chief, and are used for tribal transactions.

Not many years ago a tribe, flying in panic from their islet on seeing the Government schooner approaching, had their canoes intercepted, and about thirty or forty of their *taefilias* were taken from them as a penalty for a murder for which they were tribally responsible. So the tribal treasury was emptied, and would take a good many years to replenish. They would have to be on their good behaviour for quite a long time, for money is power among primitive people, quite as much as among civilized. The circulation of it is incessant and rapid. The most that a powerful chief can accumulate is not great, for he has to spend to show that he is a powerful chief, and at his death there is confusion and distribution of his goods. His successor may succeed quietly, but only by paying heavily in a lavish distribution of the tribal wealth.

Pigs are valuable, worth up to about six pounds, and used in large dealings. The sum offered for a white man's head was some years ago very large : three or four pigs, three *taefilias*, four thousand fish teeth was the sort of offer made. To the native seeing is believing, so the money offered would be displayed to stimulate the covetous or enterprising

to try to earn it. Nowadays, especially in the most civilized islands, the chief's power is waning, because he is no longer the richest man in the tribe. The monies earned in plantations tend more and more to become the earner's own property, and so do not pass through the chief's hands for use for tribal purposes. So he can no longer give feasts or entertain visitors as of old, and his prestige is waning. Native money affairs are most intricate. They live in a tangle of mutual debts, and tenacious memories carry on transactions begun generations back.

In proportion as Germany pays France, France will pay England, and England will pay America is the kind of financial game at which they are adepts. The settling of the old debts of the Southern States of America incurred during the Civil War, and never paid, against the present debt of England and America, is just what they would revel in. When tribe A buys a wife from tribe B for three pigs and a thousand porpoise teeth and two fathom of red shell money, it means that the next generation tribe B must buy wives from tribe A at the same rate. I do not think there is a system of interest on borrowed money, unless it is in cases of personal promise or transaction. There is much dunning for debt, for no debtor pays before he is forced to. This is hardly dishonesty, but simply business. Their promises and pledges are on the sanguine side, and accepted in the like spirit. So they are usually both debtors and creditors. Hence the extreme complication of their money matters. What Tom owes Harry is offered by Harry to Jack. Tom perhaps

will indignantly repudiate the debt. That is Jack's concern, not Harry's, and their descendants will carry on the contest and pass it on to their children. Occasionally between two tribes the slate is wiped clean. There is interchange of monies after a life has been conceded, and they make a fresh start. A trifle on account is a very common way of putting off the evil day of full payment, or a promise of prompt settlement; for human nature is the same everywhere, only a little more naïve and undisguised in primitive life.

Trade tobacco is another common medium of exchange. This is packed in cases of from about forty-five pounds to fifteen pounds weight, and used as money. About twenty-six sticks go to make one ounce; each stick is now worth about threepence, six times what it was in pre-duty days. A favourite Sunday afternoon pastime of plantation boys is gambling with the three sticks of tobacco which they receive weekly. It was plantation boys from Queensland who first learned to gamble. It is not a native habit, as far as I know. The Chinese small traders whose launches visit native villages are great encouragers of this vice. Natives quite lose their heads over it, and are an easy prey to any slightly less excitable. (They also play card games with mysterious rules of their own, but happily a pack of cards does not last long in their grimy hands.) English money is coming more and more into use. There is said to be over £100,000 worth of silver coinage in circulation in the Solomons.

There are also in circulation five-shilling and ten-shilling Solomon Island notes, begun during the

War, for which the Solomon Islands Government is the security. There must be quite a large sum in gold, too, still held in native hands, and occasionally visible. English notes and monies are more and more used among the natives themselves as they get to know the value they represent side by side with their native money and sticks of tobacco. They naturally much prefer the solid silver to the fragile paper money. The white man's wealth seems to them unlimited. He has only to sit down and write on a bit of paper whatever sum he wants, and it is at his command. I remember once owing a boy the sum of £2 for work done. As I had no cash, I used an old cheque form as a memorandum, and told him to bring it to me at a certain time and he would get the £2. He did not turn up. But many months afterwards a bush man turned up with the soiled cheque form, which the receiver had given him in payment for £2, and he had accepted. Luckily, I was able to cash it and uphold the honour of the white man.

The natives are generous in their money dealings as a rule. Generosity brings *mana*, and they love to make a display. Their proceedings are lengthy and elaborate, and an interest to all, whether directly concerned or not. They will also wrangle endlessly over a single fish-tooth. Each one is examined to see its condition, and rejected if the tip is broken, or the hole at the root pierced for stringing is imperfect. The white man who acts as storekeeper and sells to natives has a trying job. He generally hands over the work to a trained native, but now most of the trade with natives is in Chinese hands.

The storekeeper must be ready to endure this sort of thing :—On Saturday morning, say, about seven o'clock, a party of natives arrive and sit down outside the store till it opens at eight o'clock. There are ten of them, one of whom has a shilling to spend on something, and they mean to make the most of the occasion. First calico is looked at and discussed at length ; then handkerchiefs, belts, tobacco, jews' harps, lanterns, tins of sardines, salmon, etc., etc. All ten discuss amply each item and handle it, too, if possible. At last near closing time a belt is decided on after a dozen other things have been priced and almost accepted. How much ? One shilling. The man still tenders coin by coin—ninepence in three threepenny pieces, and then stops. "That is all I have." Then, finding that the price is still one shilling, the last threepence is produced from among the party and handed over. They have had a happy morning, as happy as the haunters of bargain sales, but the salesman's feelings are not quite so placid. There are two prices, that to the white purchaser and a considerably higher one to the native. This is hard on the native, for he cannot see reasons for it. Within limits it can be justified, but there should be fair limits, for the native is at a disadvantage, not knowing the relative value of the varied goods that may strike his fancy. He tries to retaliate by asking sometimes absurd prices for his yams or bananas if he finds a demand for them. But increasing competition tends to settle and make regular prices on both sides.

Dunning for debt is an amusing and effective process. After repeated applications had failed it

used to be a fighting matter that the tribe found it to their interest to settle. But it might be the debtor's debtor who was threatened, not the debtor himself, for he had passed the debt on to the third party. The creditor, too, might be a third party who had been told to collect his debt from the real creditor's debtor. A peaceful method of settlement was to go to a village and live there at the selected village's expense till the debt was paid. A large party would be made up to go to the village on such occasions, and their keep soon became a burden, much heavier than the debt, which would be at last paid. Then there was sure to be another debt owed by the dunning tribe that the dunned would in turn dun for. Natives have ample time on their hands, and this sort of thing occupies it in a way very interesting to them. Their estimates of value are still somewhat crude. I think I have told elsewhere of the chief who brought me nine sovereigns to pay for a man-of-war to come and avenge his son's murder. He thought such an offer on his part would be an irresistible inducement to the Government to act.

Some of his folk, returned from Queensland perhaps, had had experience of the system of "tips," and its potentialities seemed illimitable. Anyhow, they all know a sovereign when they see it. An event will never happen again such as is said by good authority to have befallen about 1870. A native showed to the cook of the schooner *Southern Cross*, engaged in her mission work, a pot of bright yellow "buttons" (sovereigns salvaged from a wreck, really), which the cook cheerfully bought at a stick

of tobacco ($\frac{1}{2}$ d.) per button. Both parties were well pleased, but the cook was not so pleased when it came to the ears of Bishop Selwyn, not the man to be lenient to such an offence. A few natives came back from Queensland or Fiji with stores of gold instead of *bokus* full of clothes, etc.

I remember that one who had been many years in Fiji returned with at least four hundred sovereigns. Another from Queensland I remember buying his safety on being landed at a place where his welcome was doubtful, by plunging his hand into his pocket and showing it full of gold to the canoe folk who were taking him ashore. Some natives now are educated enough to be able to keep simple accounts, and are trustable with goods for sale. Trouble arises when a brother, or friend, or uncle pays for goods received with promises only. One trader told me that they estimated for 16 per cent. loss in this fashion on goods put down with natives to sell. This was one reason for the high prices charged; 50 per cent. on what it cost the trader is what they generally reckon to charge.

Years ago one saw in the Solomons what was practically a socialistic system in working order, for tribal ways are socialistic. It worked out as a fairly even distribution of food and money over the tribe. No one need go hungry, unless all did, at famine times. The young men were expected to work, and got their reward at feasts, dances, and so forth. Their wives were bought for them, and they settled down pretty early to be *arais*, literally husbands, practically elders, whose voice was listened to in informal village councils. The aged, past work,

were sure of food and shelter ; for those able to work there was always land to cultivate. The fatal blot on it all was that there was no progress. The man of energy or ambition had but a very limited outlet for it, except as a fighter. A better garden or a bigger hut than the average was no profit to its possessor. His clansmen filled his house, ate his food, and were bitterly jealous of his pretensions to make himself a "big man." So there was no incentive to progress, but every kind of difficulty was placed in its way. Culture remained on the same low level generation after generation, and custom was an all-powerful bondage. Only the inbreaking from without, with its teaching of individuality and its incentive to acquire and to be selfish, could alter this state of things. In every state of culture it is not money, but love of money, that is the root of every kind of evil, just as much in the Solomon Islands as in England.

The bank of a tribe is the chief's house, generally a dark room at the end of the long house, or sometimes on an overhead floor at the far end from the door. In either case a place dark and not easy of access. I have never heard of a case of it being broken into, for to do that would be like burgling your own goods. Practically public opinion governs its use, except when the chief is strong enough to be a despot, and that is not very often. Generally speaking they are improvident and extravagant, but there is no use or profit in being otherwise. One great economic change is the money value that coconuts have acquired. They have only to go out and pick them up, husk them, cut up the nut, dry in the

sun or over a fire, string the dried pieces in tens, and sell to the white man or Chinaman.

A village can soon earn £100 or £200 in this way, and buy a boat, or corrugated iron, or timber. It is a fall from the days when, if they wanted something big or important, they had to make it for themselves, or if they wanted cash they had, as they still fortunately do, to collect porpoises for their teeth, and dive for and grind into discs the shell they wanted. Dogs' teeth are not in much use now. This is good for the dog. The unfortunate animal in former days was buried in the sand up to his neck, and then the two long canine teeth were hauled or dug out. A curiosity of commerce is perhaps worth mentioning. Some years ago there was a rabies scare in Sydney, and all stray dogs were rounded up and killed. Their canine teeth were exported to the Solomons. Once more emerges from all this chapter the old fact that the differences of culture are mainly superficial; the man is the same under every environment.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

Feasts, Dancing, and Music

QUITE a large proportion of the natives' time is devoted to making or attending feasts, large or small, vegetable only, or fish feasts, or pig feasts. All the events of their lives, great or small, are thus celebrated. A "feast" may be anything from the cooking of a special pudding for half a dozen people, to welcome a man's wife back after childbirth to the village and her hut, and to reward the women who have more or less looked after her, up to a great tribal feast, for which a hundred pigs have been killed, and ten thousand taro and hundreds of yams cooked. At such a feast thousands may gather. There are birth feasts and death feasts, marriage feasts, peace feasts and war feasts, house or canoe building feasts, planting and harvesting feasts, sacrificial and sacred feasts, feasts of eating only, or with dancing and singing added, feasts before or after expeditions for fighting or porpoise-hunting or trading, feasts to propitiate the spirits, heathen feasts and Christian feasts. So the feast devotee can spend much of his time over making or attending such occasions, near or far, invited or self-called. Feasts are made to encourage workers at different stages of a job, and after its completion; they are the workers' pay. Feasts are made to show the importance of the village, its wealth and

greatness ; feasts are made as a return for previous feasts. If village A killed twenty pigs and village B attended, it is up to village B, before again feasting with A, to kill at least as many, if they want to keep up their reputation.

Let me try and describe a big feast. A chief in honour of his dead father prepares to make the final death feast. He promised a hundred pigs, and has already in smaller preliminary feasts killed forty. So sixty are expected of him at the finale. Months before pigs have been bought far up in the bush or from neighbouring islands. Or perhaps the village stock of pigs is sufficient to supply the demand. The date has been vaguely talked of for months ; two or more years have passed since the chief died. At last the time is at hand. The invitations are broadcast by drum. Forty days before the feast the drum beats, and ends its weird, prolonged tom-tom-tom with forty sharp taps ; the next day thirty-nine taps are given, and so on, till the eventful day. Every day sees the women entering the village laden with baskets of taro, yam, coconuts, other nuts, green stuffs, till the piles of food become enormous. Then comes the cooking. The unfortunate pigs are seized, their snouts tied up tight to gag their squalls, and held over the fires till the hair is singed off ; then they are strangled—or, nowadays, their throats cut ; strangling and singeing alive are *tapu* in Christian villages—and the carcasses cut up. The pieces are wrapped in leaves, and cooked on hot stones in the native ovens. Alongside of this has gone on the pounding-up and mashing in wooden bowls of the taro and yam. This mash is made into vast

puddings, mixed with nuts and covered with coconut milk, a stodgy and rich confection, of which a very little is quite good feeding for a white man's palate and appetite. For the taro mash—a much prized root-food—special bowls and mashing sticks are kept. The sound of the pounding of the pudding sounds cheerfully through the village. When taken from the bowls the pudding is either tied up in parcels—banana leaves are used for this—or spread out on the ground with banana leaves as tablecloth. Of one such pudding I once paced (about one hundred yards long), I have made mention.

Now it is mid-day and the feast is spread. The guests have been assembling since dawn; a good many have been one or two days sitting about. They come from bush and coast, invited broadcast, in all their ornaments and well armed. They do not mix together, but stand in groups apart. Some are in a state of war with others there, but it is a temporary truce at the feast, uneasily kept. Daring spirits, relying on this, swagger about—if very daring, unarmed—but generally they are in parties big enough to secure their protection. Their women and children are grouped behind them. The little boys are in great glory, wearing collars of porpoise teeth, one thousand to five thousand in a collar, round their necks, to display their people's importance. Earrings, nose-rings, or shells round the head, breast ornaments, nose-sticks, bracelets, anklets, gaudy calico loincloths, headdresses adorn the young men, who are very much in evidence. To each party is brought its leaf-wrapped portion, containing food enough for many mighty meals. At once on

receiving their portion each party hurries away with it, back to their bush track or canoe. They want to get back to their village before dark, and they want to get back safely. No "Thank you" is said. That would be rude, as implying surprise at the amount proffered. But the amount is marked, and "Do as you have been done by" is the motto for the return feast.

The number of guests is unknown beforehand, but the supply is generous enough to cover all possibilities. If the number is excessive all the food is distributed and the givers go without, to show that they are doing their best. There is no sitting down together, or prolonged eating. Once the food is set out all is over in a few minutes. The whole night before the feast has been devoted from sunset to sunrise to a sing-song. Hour after hour songs have been chanted telling of the exploits of former days, decent and the reverse; it is a night of much licence, and the usual moral restraints are relaxed. Parties wander about chatting and laughing, in and out of the firelight, and pausing occasionally to listen to the singing and drumming. Guns are fired off into the air, tins are beaten, and every kind of noise assails the ear.

Next morning at dawn the singers retire to get a little sleep while the feast is preparing.

There is generally a dance. A party from a neighbouring village has been engaged for this. They arrive decked up as described, add to themselves special dance ornaments, headdresses, flowers, sticks trimmed with feathers. A band sets up the music, and the dances go forward. These dances are

pantomimic in character, depicting war (very ferocious these), or canoe scenes, or bird life ; some have been handed down for generations, but new ones are constantly being invented. Grandsires and their grandchildren take part, but the young men are the chief actors. The movements are intricate, and at first seem monotonous. But to the expert eye of the native there is infinite variety. Four or five movements with a pause between constitute a dance. The dancers are in a double line, led by two experts. Some are full of motion as they weave in and out, facing each other, retiring, returning, stamping, shaking their nut-shell anklets in order to clash them together. Other dances are done whilst squatting, by motion of head and arms. In some islands the women dance as well as the men, but, of course, never together ; that would be quite unseemly. After a successful movement a rush by the spectators will be made for the best dancers, who are carried out in triumph shoulder-high. Their admiring friends, by the way, expect a reward for this exhibition of their admiration from the hero concerned.

In some dances the dancers assume the part of spirits, and are objects of fearful admiration. There is a dance in which they roll themselves in thick clay mud from the crown of their head to the tips of their toes and stalk about with terrifying gestures ; there are war dances that are meant to stir up blood lust ; there are licentious dances ; but there are many that are graceful and pretty pantomimes of their daily life, or of the lives of birds, and so forth, well worth preserving and encouraging. The native

gets quite absorbed in his dancing, and to him it is serious art. But with civilization it tends to become a conventional show, with much of reality gone out of it, carelessly got up and casual in performance. Night is also a favourite time for dancing. It is performed by the light of huge fires; the brown, unclothed, bedecked bodies leaping in the light of the fire display a weird, diabolic spectacle, most thrilling and uncanny, a sort of hobgoblin cinema show of intense emotion, deep in the thick, silent bush, lit by the flickering blaze of torches and fires. The day after the sing-song, plus dance, plus feast, is generally a day of rest, broken by extra large meals of the food that remains unconsumed.

Native music is, of course, part of native dancing. There is always a band to set the time. Usually the band has three performers, who squat in the middle of the dancing ground. They perform on small drums and sing as well, making weird, monotonous sounds, of which they never seem to weary. Sometimes a band of five or six will be present, blowing on various-sized pan-pipes; all their "tunes" sound much the same, and end up with a deep ur-urr-urrr thumping. Such bands also give performances apart from dancing. The pan-pipe, made of bamboo, is a very favourite instrument.

Their big instrument is the drum, which plays a great part in native life. Some of these drums are of enormous size, and their booming is heard at an immense distance. Imagine a rough wooden pillar-box made in one piece out of a tree-trunk—black, with a long slit in one side (not at the top), parallel with the box (not across it), and you get something

like a big native drum, very resonant when thumped with the thick native drum-sticks. The bigger the drum the prouder the village that possesses it, and the chief in whose hut it is stored. A village that has two or three drums as big as pillar-boxes and some food bowls as big as baths has possessions worth preserving. Of smaller drums there may be any number. These drums are used for all sorts of purposes. They sound the alarm : "Hurry back to your village ; some one has just been killed, or dead, or the enemy has been sighted prowling around." They utter curses, deep, "death-threatening, terrifying bad words" ; they invite to dances ; they mourn over a chief's death ; they send messages ; they greet visitors ; they jeer at enemies ; they call peaceful villagers to church, and they get on the white man's nerves ! Out in the bush one hears the monotonous tom-toming starting at dark ; it will go on tom-tom-tom all the long night through. It wants resolution to refuse to listen to it, lest you lose all hope of sleep and a sound brain. All the villages around are listening, gloomy or rejoicing, as the message carries encouragement or defiance, alarm or assurance, wailing or rejoicing, cursing or friendship to their quick ears, telling of a fight or a feast, a curse or a prayer, a call to arms, or a call to church.

So the drum plays a great part in native life, and stirs him to the depths of his nature. It is a dramatic newspaper, with its birth, marriage, and death columns, and news of tragedies, comedies, disasters, political affairs, and social events. Native singing is, to our ears, monotonous and uninspiring. But many

of them have good voices and a capacity for part-singing. The women's voices are shrill, and at a little distance the sound is like that of a brass band broken loose. They readily pick up airs and tunes, and enjoy singing them. A harmonium is an instrument with which they soon get on terms pleasing to themselves, and jews' harps are an acceptable gift. The phonograph is a marvel, and to one who first hears it the question is, where is the spirit that is so strangely vocal. But none of these things stir them like their own native tom-tom or pan-pipes.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

Native Law

AT first sight it seems that the primitive native lives in a state of anarchy, "every man doing that which is right in his own eyes," where might is right. It is not so really, of course. True, life is very insecure. So is property. There is no government, only tribes. It is when we come to the word "tribe" that we can begin to unravel what seems utter confusion, and find not, indeed, a government giving law and securing order, but customs very binding, which make life possible. A tribe may be compared to a swarm of bees clustered round its chief, the king bee.

The chief's position, as has been often shown elsewhere, is not that of an autocratic lawgiver, nor need it depend on personal loyalty. It stands or falls with the prevailing feeling as to his *mana*. His vague divinity hedges him, but the hedge may be broken through. He may presume on it till his men disobey him. Perhaps no visible harm befalls them. Then with that chief it is a case of "Ichabod," his glory has departed; and confusion follows. But generally something unpleasant does befall somebody during the incipient rebellion. Then the *mana* seems to be visibly at work, and the opposition, which is often that of a small aggressive minority, dies down, scared for its life. I remember

a native remarking to a white man to whom obedience was more readily given than usual, "You see you have *mana*." That placed him practically in the position of a chief. *Mana*, plus personal liking, enables its possessor to get his way with wonderful ease, and things go smoothly without the sanction of definite laws or rules. A tribe thus governed may have fairly long periods of happy, quiet life, peaceful and orderly, when, as they say, all is entirely well with them and there is no news.

The chief has no definite powers of punishing offenders, but very real ones, nevertheless. The extreme penalty within a tribe is usually expulsion. A man driven out of his tribe is lost. He has no real home, but wanders about to various villages, where he has connections perhaps by marriage. He will find food and shelter for a time, even a welcome if he behaves himself, but he has no definite status ; he is like the landless man of Saxon times. So keeping within the tribe is for the great majority their normal life ; on it depends their welfare and such security as they can have. For tribal life is fenced by customs. And these are very binding. There is the chief, the land, the village, in which each has his share. In some ways there is great freedom for the individual ; in others tight bondage. He works when he likes, eats when he likes, sleeps when he likes, goes and comes as he likes, and resents restraint in any of these matters. But he cannot marry as he likes, or hoard as he likes his food or money, or steal, or kill or desert his wife, or steal another man's wife or daughter as he likes. He does all or many of these things, but at a risk to

himself that restrains the majority. For example, if he steals another's wife or daughter it will not be from his own tribe ; he runs the risk of being killed by the offended tribe. If he defies tribal law he may be expelled or fined. There is no formal court, no definite trial, or sentence of guilty. But tribal opinion compels his compliance, and the offender had better make reparation for offences condemned by public opinion. It is a very loose and inexact system, where the weaker is apt to go to the wall and accept wrong, the strong man to invent wrongs and exact heavy redress, but, looked at broadly, it is very far from anarchy.

Village life is (or rather was) in the main guided and controlled by the older men. They formed a sort of informal village council round the chief, and were much respected. To defy or insult them was a serious matter. This respect for age was a marked characteristic of native life, and its strongest cement. It was partly religious, perhaps mainly so, for the old men knew the ways and customs and led the tribe in sacrifices. The young unmarried men were expected to obey them and to work for them, to work in their gardens, build their huts or canoes, and so forth, and to restrain themselves from individual fighting or indiscriminate license. Their status was changed when they married. In Mala the word for village elder, a title of respect given to white men, is properly " husband " (*arai*). The married man as a rule soon settled down, and, as middle age comes quickly in the Solomons, had a comparatively early voice and position among the elders. He became a man with responsibilities, no

longer one of the hot-heads, eager for any excitement and easily carried beyond all reason. The native loves palavers, and village affairs are discussed endlessly as they sit together for long hours at evening and far into the night. Tribal politics are discussed from the biggest to the smallest details, and individuals are scolded and penalized. This is about as near as primitive man gets to a court of justice.

Fining is the ordinary remedy. The fine is demanded by the aggrieved party. The amount depends on the weight of public opinion. But the amount is not so significant as the giving of something by way of amendment. So the tribe manages to hang together and to live, with its village and gardens, on the whole a decent, orderly life, with spasmodic intervals and sudden, violent interruptions. For long spells you would find happy children and a quiet, peaceful village where nothing happened and life was calm and simple, and there was plenty of laughter and fun—and then at any moment the sudden squall, a jealous wife is raging, some one has stolen bananas, two men have had a row, two children have hit each other, and all is wild turmoil in a moment. Normally they are quiet and friendly; the children learn not to quarrel, because there is such a big trouble if they do. But human nature is weak, and exceptions are all too frequent. All the innumerable *tapus* of which I have written are in a way a system tending towards law and order. They discipline and restrain individuals and are of great practical value. Their sanction is a sanction of fear and superstition, non-moral, but indispensable in primitive culture. A hungry or greedy

boy sees a *tapu* mark on a coconut tree or a banana plant, and fears to climb up and steal the coveted fruit. He may be safely out of sight, but some evil will befall him if he breaks the *tapu*. There is no policeman, no gaol, no magistrate, but the fruit is safely left unwatched, with rare exceptions. Multiply this example by countless others, and one sees practical common sense in much that seems without reason. And, after all, primitive man has a conscience and a decent respect for honesty and order, and the great majority, left to themselves, want to live in peace and quietness and mind their own business.

As to marriage, there is what may be called very definite law. It is exogamic. No one can marry into his or her own tribe. It is secured by payment, and if the marriage tie is broken the money must be returned. It is normally for life; polygamy is quite in order, though chiefly practised by chiefs. Polyandry I have never come across. Generally the system is matriarchal. The child belongs to the mother's tribe, and her brothers are the guardians. But in Mala, at any rate, in practice this is hardly the case, though the theory still holds as to rank. The son usually succeeds the father as chief, or a brother as the male relation, and inherits the father's possessions, and is the guardian of his family. Mala is probably more patriarchal in practice than other islands. Law again may be said to regulate land ownership, which is primarily tribal, as I have shown in a previous chapter.

What is to be said of the laws and customs that govern intertribal relations? What have they cor-

responding to international law? Well, there is inter-tribal law of a sort governed by certain customs. The primary law is that tribes not connected by marriage or other relationships are enemies, and every visit probably, if not openly hostile, has a hostile intent. They go to each other with a strong enough force to make attack dangerous. All their intercourse is under arms. Often one or two men will walk into a village where they are anything but welcome, trusting to the fear they inspire and to the prestige of their tribe to do so unattacked. The ambassador's life is normally safe. He carries messages to and fro containing challenges, demands, threats, and so forth. He is probably a member of a third tribe, not just then at war with either of the other two.

In time of stress alliances are made, backed by money offers, between tribes. A coast tribe will hire a bush tribe to forbid the enemy or *omea* on the war-path to pass through its territory. The state of *omea* is quite definite, and has its rules. There is a general *omea* war expedition, its destination and object unknown, for there may be several quite different objects in view. There is the man only *omea*: women and children are safe. There is the promiscuous *omea*, where anyone may be attacked, regardless of age or sex. There is the particular *omea*, when some individual is wanted. It sounds quaintly casual when a war party arrives in a village to hear them assuring the alarmed villagers, "Oh, no, this *omea* is not against you to-day. We only want to sleep, then to go on to another place." And then they will be quite outwardly friendly; to-

morrow it may be their turn, but to-day it's their neighbours', so all is well *pro tem*.

Market days and market-places are times of armed truce, very seldom violated. Tribal marriages are a way of making alliances. If it can be arranged for the son of the chief of tribe A to marry the daughter of the chief of tribe B, those two tribes are henceforth in alliance, even if one were a bush tribe and the other a coast tribe. The politics of an island like Mala must be pretty much like the politics of England in the days of the Heptarchy, and those are not unlike the politics of Europe during the Great War. The principles are much the same, though the scale in Mala is minute, in the Great War gigantic. Even in Mala there is inter-tribal law, generally respected, though sometimes broken. Even the practice of head-hunting had its rules, and was not just the indiscriminate raiding that it appeared to be.

The nearest approach to any system of trial in the Solomons is the calling in of the witch-doctor when witchcraft is suspected, to find out whether he is guilty, or who, if anyone, is guilty, for private use of enchantments is a crime. Of this I have written elsewhere. In cases of theft, violence, abusive language, or the like, public suspicion, if the offence is secret, or public opinion, if it is open, acts as judge. When a man finds his village against him, he will generally give in, and, guilty or innocent, pay money to settle the matter. Chiefs sometimes impose a fine, and receive the money, but more often the matter is settled, after the village has talked it well over, by a settlement between the parties concerned.

There is room under such a system for much false accusation, and for bullying demands for invented or imaginary grievances.

All this is now passing away, as the Government is making itself felt more and more. A summons to Court is the favourite threat to-day, and the law imposes fixed fines, or definite periods of imprisonment, for various offences.

So the old tribal days and ways are passing. Their end is inevitable, and is no cause for regret except to anthropologists. But what of the days to come? It is for the white man, each in his capacity as trader or official or missionary, to live among these folk, with their welfare and happiness as a primary responsibility entailed by his unsought presence.

Map for "In the Isles of King Solomon."



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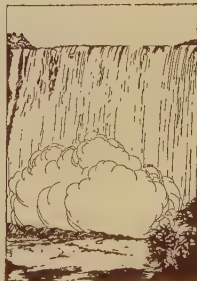
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